

# Bandwagon



**CHRISTMAS SPECIAL**  
**NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1964**



# Season's Greetings...

AND BEST WISHES FOR 1965

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May the Joys and Blessings of this  
Holy Christmas Season be with you now  
and throughout the coming New Year.

JOSEPH T. BRADBURY

# SEASONS GREETINGS **THIEME BROS. CIRCUS**

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**JAMES R. THIEME**

**LT. J. THOMAS THIEME**

**JOHN F. THIEME, JR.**

**LAFAYETTE, INDIANA**





## Introductory Brief History of Sparks Family and Title

The fascinating story of the Sparks Circus begins with the birth of John H. Wiseman in Pennsylvania in 1863. He began operating a small novelty show out of East Brady, Pa. in the early 1880's and during his travels found a young orphan boy by name of Charles Sparks whom he adopted. Charles was born in Park City, Utah about 1880. A few years later Wiseman opened an Uncle Tom Cabin Show that traveled by wagons and employed young Charles as a dancer. In 1889 according to the Sturtevant archives Wiseman framed his first circus, a small wagon show, which used the title of Sparks Bros. An advertisement in the Aug. 3, 1889 Clipper wanted

a boss canvasman for a 70 ft. top, 16 horse overland show. The ad was signed Sparks UTC Co. Perhaps this show in 1889 was a combination novelty and circus outfit. Wiseman used the name of Sparks on all of his future show operations and in fact legally changed his own name to John H. Sparks. Young Charles from the beginning was actively associated with his step father in the circus.

For the 1890 through 1892 seasons the show was known as Sparks and Allen and was a medium sized wagon circus. There is mention in the May 21, 1892 Clipper of an "Oriental R. R. Circus" with John Sparks, proprietor, but just what that show consisted of is

not known as further details are missing. Details of early Sparks circus activities are somewhat sketchy until the mid 90's. The Dec. 17, 1892 Clipper reported that George S. Cole had purchased one-half interest in the Sparks and Allen Circus.

For 1893 the show was known as Cole Colossal Circus and the Clipper listed George S. Cole and John Sparks sole owners. Further details said the show had 60 head of stock, 3 advance wagons, a 20 ft. round sideshow top and a 120 ft. round with one 50 middle big top. Charles Sparks was working educated ponies in the performance.

In 1894 Sparks began using the name of John H. Sparks Shows and continued to do so until about 1916 when the title was shortened to Sparks Circus.

In 1900 the show was converted to a 3 car railroad show. Photos of the 1902 train picture one flat car, one coach, and one large tunnel car. During the early 1900's the show was using the title of John H. Sparks Old Virginia Shows.

John H. Sparks died Jan. 29, 1903 and Charles took over the active management of the show. John H. Sparks' son, Clifton, was also associated with the show and as he became older took on greater responsibilities in the management.

The small rail show grew not spectacularly but slowly and surely. It was operated in a businesslike manner and adopted the Ringling's established policy of no grift and soon became known as the primary "Sunday School Show" in the land. No showman in the history of American circosdom enjoyed a finer reputation than Charlie Sparks. He op-



A very early photo of the John H. Sparks two car show taken in 1898. Pfening Collection.



The Sparks midway in the period around 1912. Note the ticket wagon, which is the one that recently went to the Circus World Museum in Barboo. McClintock Collection.

erated a clean show that was fair to both the public and its employees. Charles later married one of John H. Sparks' sisters and his wife, the beloved "Miss Addy" became his foremost partner in all of his circus operations. The stories told about this fine and gentle person are legion among old troupers. She was always present at the door of the cookhouse at mealtimes. Many a canvas or prop man was told by her to first go wash his face and comb his hair before entering the cookhouse, but once in, no one ever went away hungry. Likewise every man was paid his due wages in full and on time and there is no record at any time of any incivility on the management's part toward either employees or the public. Sparks ran that kind of show.

One train list for the show in the early 1900's have it increased to 5 cars, using 1 coach, 2 flats, 1 stock, and 1 tunnel car (baggage and cages). In 1909 the show was up to 7 cars and increased to 10 for the 1910 season. In 1915 it was on 11 cars and for the 1916 season the train was increased to 15 cars and the show became a major contender in the medium sized railroad show field.

The show during the years had wintered at Carthage, Ohio, Salisbury, N. C. and then took up permanent quarters for many years at Central City Park in Macon, Georgia beginning in the winter of 1918-19.

The show was enlarged to 20 cars for the 1923 season and remained on that number as long as Sparks owned the show.

Sparks was a great believer in the value of the street parade and kept the march as long as he was in command. In the period around 1915 the show often played in the middle west but rarely went west of the Mississippi but gradually the show played more and more Eastern territory. Beginning in 1919 the show nearly always made the provinces of Eastern Canada.

The season of 1928 was the last one the show was operated by Charles and Clifton Sparks. Following the season they sold the show to H. B. Gentry, who proved to be only an agent for the American Circus Corporation. Tradition has it that Sparks had said many times he would never let his show get into the hands of that outfit and he was very much upset over the turn of events.

H. B. Gentry managed the show for

This view taken at the Ringling Barnum quarters in Sarasota in 1933 or 1934 shows the wagons lined up as they were parked after the show was taken off the road following the 1931 season. Pfening Collection.



the new owners in 1929 with the show remaining the same size and the street parade retained. In September of 1929 the Sparks show along with the other American Circus Corporation properties was sold to John Ringling.



For the 1930 season the show remained on the same number of cars but the parade was dropped. Ira M. Watts was named to manage the show for the 1930 and 1931 seasons. Following the 1930 season the show abandoned the quarters in Macon and went to winter at Sarasota with Ringling-Barnum.

In 1931 the show was cut to 15 cars and the band was replaced by "canned"

music in an economy move for that great depression year. Although the show made a long season the losses suffered by all the Ringling owned shows was very heavy. It was decided to shelve the show and it never went out again. Some animals were sent to join the shows at Peru quarters and the 9 elephants were absorbed into the Ringling-Barnum herd. The Sparks wagons remained in the graveyard at Sarasota many years but were finally burned about 1940.

The Sparks title lay dormant until it appeared again in 1946 as the following article will relate.

Charles Sparks purchased the Downie Bros. motorized circus from Andrew Downie in mid-season 1930 and operated it through the 1938 season. He then retired, coming out briefly in the summer of 1943 to manage the Ringling owned Spangles Circus in Madison Square Garden. He then lived in Macon until his death in 1947. Clifton is still living in Pennsylvania. (Prepared by Bandwagon Staff with aid from Richard Conover).





# SPARKS CIRCUS

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behaving remarkably like human beings,  
in antics as amusing as they are amazing.

20 TONS OF TREMENDOUS  
PERFORMING ELEPHANTS

## TRIUMPHANTLY PERPETUATING THE GREAT SPARKS TRADITION SEASON OF 1946

By  
WM. L. ELBIRN

During January of 1946 it was revealed that James E. Edgar, recently released from the U. S. Army, would tour an ice show in the near future and that equipment for the venture had already been purchased including a 110' round top with two 31' middle pieces, trucks and refrigeration units. Edgar had been released from the Army in November of 1944 after serving eighteen months overseas and had attained the

rank of Major. Prior to World War Two Edgar had toured the United States and Canada with an ice unit labeled, "The Royal Ice Palace Review".

A quick switch in plans was revealed on February 9th with a Billboard release that due to troubles experienced with the refrigeration units and the heavy plates needed to support an ice unit that other plans were in the works to utilize the equipment already assembled for the

show. On March 9th it was revealed that the famed Sparks title had been obtained on a lease arrangement from Ringling-Barnum, additional truck units had already been purchased and that the new Sparks Circus would spring at Arcadia, Florida on March 22nd. Information was also provided at this time that the bill car under manager Tommy Bryden and with five billers was already at work. Twenty-five men were in Sarasota quarters preparing the equipment with Ralph Clawson as general manager in charge.

During the week of March 17th, complete organizational plans were released. Incorporation papers listed the corporation title as the Florida Circus Corp. with Marshall Johnson as president, Ralph J. Clawson as vice president and general manager and James E. Edgar, secretary and treasurer. Johnson, a resident of Selma, Alabama, had been a long time friend of Clawson's since the latter had been associated with the John Robinson Circus and had discussed with him during the 1945 season the possibility of putting out a new circus. The actual formation of the trio of personalities had taken place on February 11, 1946 and plans had progressed rapidly from there.

With the show about ready to hit the road for the season, an experienced staff was gathered on short notice. These included: Arnold Maley, show secretary-treasurer; James Mills, auditor and legal adjuster; Marshall Green, general agent; James M. Beach, contracting agent; Charles Underwood, contracting press agent; Walter D. Nealand, publicity director; Benny Fowler, 24 hour man; Rod Lunsford, questrian director; James R. Gallagher, banner salesman; Dennie Helms, superintendent; Fred Eichelmann, boss canvassman; Charles Webb, assistant boss canvassman.

The official route book for the season also lists the following as department heads: Tommy Bryden, car manager; Al Tomamani, sideshow manager; Red Lunsford, concert; Cy Murray, cook-house; Victor Robbins, bandmaster; Frank Weiner, front door; Tom Kennedy, concessions; Louis Scheidke, transportation; Harry Hammond, inside tickets; Glenn Graves, announcer; Mrs. Cy Compton, wardrobe mistress; Paul Scott, downtown ticket sales; Jack Nelson, electrical department; Calvin Schaefer, prop boss; Gene "Whitey" Haven, elephants; James Pierson, head usher and Ernie Burch, producing clown.

Several days before the scheduled opening date at Arcadia the fleet left the Sarasota quarters. All trucks had been painted red with most lettering done in Aluminum. The units were presentable



The unusual marquee shown in a photo taken by Chief Keys who was with the show. Pfening Collection.



The European wild animal cages were carried on this semi. Bob Good Photo from author's collection.

but practically no flash was added other than the basic show title. The loading order for show owned units is as follows:

**Straight trucks:**

- No. 32 Cookhouse
- No. --- Shop truck
- No. --- Compressor and reserve gasoline
- No. 22 Air cally, band tops and props, used as bandstand in big top
- No. 16 Stake and chain, boom and winch
- No. 23 Band sleeper, bus
- No. --- Wrecker, water tank, marquee
- No. --- Props
- No. 25 Cookhouse baggage
- No. 4 Props and rigging
- No. --- Small tops

**Semi's;**

- No. 31 Two dens of 13 cats for Damoo Dohrtre's act
- No. 15 Big top-poles and canvas
- No. 18 Stringers and planks
- No. --- Bibles and planks
- No. --- Bulls
- No. 24 Sleeper
- No. 20 Padroom, wardrobe and trunks
- No. 29 Light plant
- No. 1 Office
- No. --- Sideshow poles, canvas and props
- No. 9 Arena and props
- No. 19 Chairs
- No. 7 Concessions
- No. 2 Concessions

Although the third middle piece for the big top had not been delivered for opening day, the show made a fine lot appearance. When viewed later in the season the big top with all canvas up measured 110' by 222'. Chairs were ten high on both sides and the blues were fifteen high which left room for only a small track. Total seating was estimated at about 3700. Only one row of quarter poles was used on the top and all poles were of wood construction. The canvas was white for the top, sidewall and marquee. Views of the other tops on the show depict them as being khaki or white tops of ancient vintage. The sideshow top was a 40' by 80' oblong, cookhouse 20' by 60', the ushers top 20' by 30' and the band top about 20' by 20'.

Business at the opening stand was great and the management announced that it exceeded expectations. The show carried a printed program and this differs from the account carried in other publications. Although the patrons at Arcadia probably viewed a program dif-

The performers sleeper, with dual axels, typical of the semis used shortly after the war. Bob Good Photo from author's collection.



fering from the one listed here, this is the official program that was listed in the season route book issued at the close of the season.

- Display 1. Grand Opening Spectacle and Entry O "Americana" by the entire company.
- Display 2. Ring 1—Ted Hodgini & Ernie Burch, comedy acrobats.
- Ring 3—Maxine Silverlake & Billy Barton, Roman Rings.
- Display 3. Ring 2—"Prince" Damoo Dohrtre presenting in the steel arena a group of 2 black leopards, 7 spotted leopards, 2 black jaguars and 2 pumas.
- Display 4. Ring 1—Riding dog & monkey, Josephine Herbling.
- Ring 3—Riding dog & monkey, George Barton.
- Display 5. Lillian Wilson doing a neck loop and swivel.
- Display 6. Equestrienne riding by Esma Maley and George Barton.
- Display 7. Web routines with Maxine Silverlake, Jerrull Deane and Josephine Herbling.
- Display 8. Clown band number with Ernie Burch, Elmer Lindquist, Billy Barton, Gilbert Wilson, Zeke LaMont and Ted Hodgini.
- Display 9. First concert announcement featuring Col. Red Lunsford. Other riders were Irene Montana, Richard Lunsford, Jr., and Elmer Davis.
- Display 10. Lady Principal riding act featuring Ruth Connelly.
- Display 11. Clown crazy number.
- Display 12. Swinging ladders with Miss Silverlake, Miss Deane and Miss Herbling.
- Display 13. Educated canines presented by Lillian Wilson.
- Display 14. Clown stop.
- Display 15. Ring 1—Senor Don Jose Fernandez in a loop the loop aerial turn.
- Ring 3—Billy Barton, cloud swing.
- Display 16. 2nd concert announcement.
- Display 17. Riding mechanic presented by George Barton and Josephine Herbling.
- Display 18. Clown number.
- Display 19. Sparks Elephants worked by Whitey Haven and Jerrull Deane Haven.
- Display 20. The Riding Conley Troupe featuring James, Freida, Ruth & Fred.
- Display 21. Clown walkaround.
- Display 22. Senorita Anna Mendoza, "The Queen of the Air", from Venezuela presenting

her sensational hair spin and slide for life from the dome of the big top.

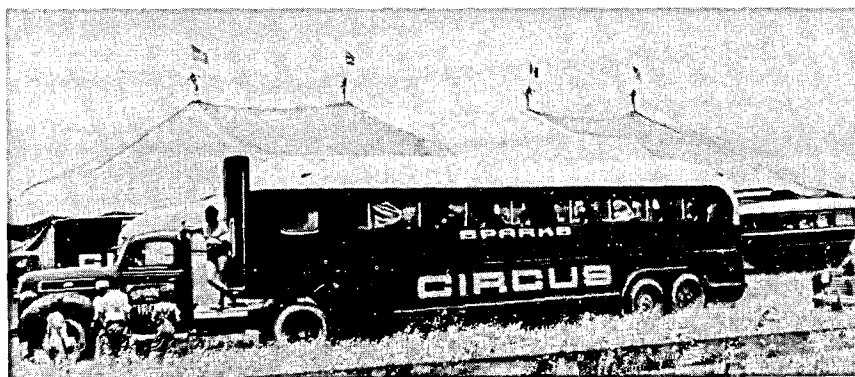
Display 23. Grand Finale.

The opening performance ran two hours and twenty minutes and was very well received. The Vic Robbins band of eight pieces including the air cally was credited with providing excellent music for background. This outfit made a fine impression appearance wise as they were decked out in colorful band wardrobe that had come from the Ringling show, as had much of the other colorful wardrobe on the show.

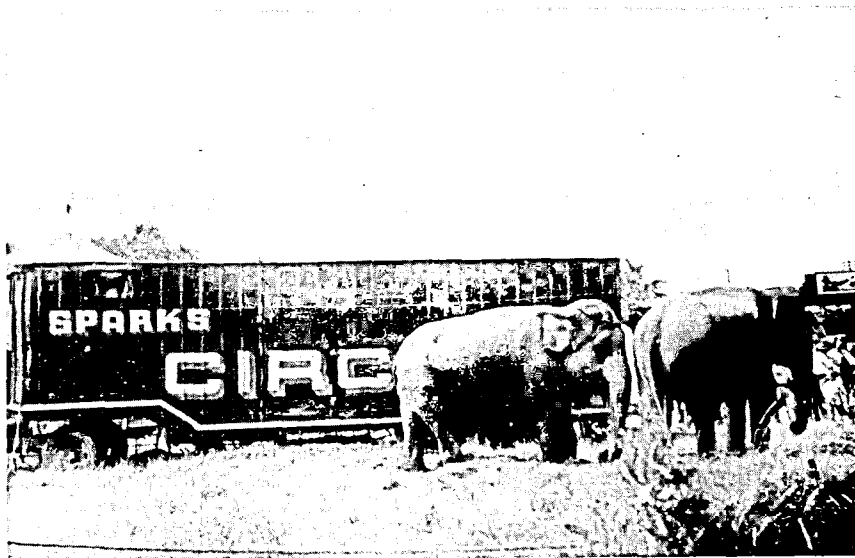
Efforts to definitely track the lineage of the shows two elephants has caused the insertion of the following letter from Chang Reynolds and is presented in its entirety.

"Contrary to what you have said about the two elephants on the Sparks Circus of 1946, I find that the two bulls were Topsy and Pinto. I noticed that John Crowley lists them as Pinto and Bess in the July-August issue of White Tops. However, I cannot place a bull named Bess in the Ringling show that could have leased to the Sparks outfit. I have always believed that the two animals were Topsy and Pinto. The Billboard of that year carried a photo of Topsy that was taken on the lot in Springfield, Mass. The story mentions a birthday celebration for Topsy in Bangor, Maine and the elephant was advertised as having her 90th birthday on that date. Of course she wasn't that old but the Billboard definitely refers to Topsy.

Now this is one of two bulls named







The two Ringling elephants are shown in front of the bull semi. This truck had formerly been on the Clyde Beatty truck show. Burt Wilson Collection.

Topsy that could have been on Sparks. The older Topsy was on the J. Augustus Jones show in 1912 and was sold to the John Sparks Circus in 1913. She remained on the Sparks Circus until it was sold to Ringling and she remained in their herd. In 1935 she was estimated to be 53 years old, weighed 6680 lbs. and stood 7 ft. 8 inches. This is the Topsy I think was on the Sparks in both 1946 and 1947 because of the age mentioned in the Billboard quotation.

The other Topsy, a younger animal, went from the Gentry Circus in 1929 to Sells-Floto. She was on the S-F herd from then until 1932 and then went to the Al G. Barnes Circus. She was on that circus when it was absorbed by R-B in 1938 and then became part of that herd. I don't know what happened to this one. I don't want to rule out the possibility that this may be the Sparks Topsy but present evidence that I have doesn't indicate that she was.

Now, unfortunately too, there is some sort of confusion in my mind regarding Pinto. As usual, R-B owned a couple of Pinto elephants. The Ringling Pinto was

on the herd as early as 1911 and continued with it until the 1930's and probably later. In 1935 she was 45 years old, weighed 7150 lbs. and stood 7 ft. 10 inches.

The second Pinto was brought to the United States in 1895 by Carl Hagenbeck. I refer to her as Wallace Pinto as she was sold to B. E. Wallace in 1900 and remained there until 1919 when Mugivan and Bowers bought her along with the show. I assume that she was there during the seasons of 1922, 1923 and 1924. She was among the group (the whole herd) that was switched to the John Robinson Circus at the end of the 1924 season. In 1931 she was back on Hagenbeck-Wallace again and listed as being 45 years old. She was probably on the 1937-38 Hagenbeck show as she was out here at the old Barnes quarters in 1939 and I think she also did some time in Venice. However, R-B switched a bunch of bulls on Cheerful Gardner when they came through in 1939 so I don't know which Pinto ended up here. In 1941 Smith's census lists only one Pinto in the R-B herd. My thoughts are that the first Pinto mentioned here is probably the one on Sparks in 1946 and 1947".

Following the smash opening, the

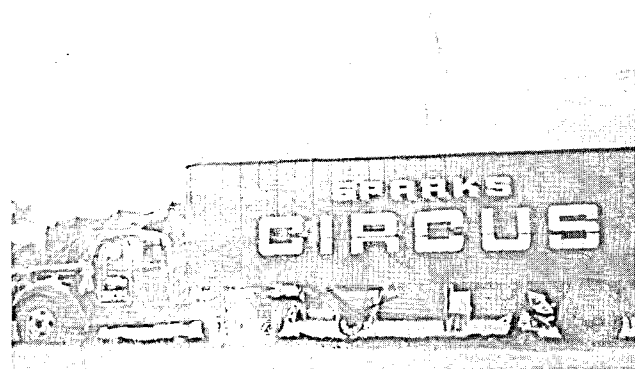
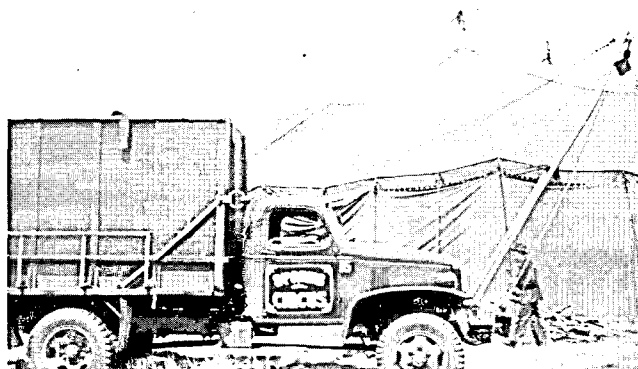
circus played to two weeks of only average business through Florida. Ocala and Kissimmee both had very strong houses during this period. One week in South Carolina also was not spectacular. The first rains of the season came in the fourth week at Salisbury, N. C. on April 16th but business had picked up by this time. The show was routed through the areas where the title had been a household byword for several decades. Completing a week in North Carolina, the show continued moving Northward into Virginia. Petersburg came up with a half and full houses in the rain. At Newport News the show had two days of rain and by getaway night the lot was so deep in mud that the Cetlin-Wilson Carnival showing on a nearby lot loaned tractors and other heavy equipment to get the circus units out onto high ground. The two day stand was only average with houses ranging between half and three quarters.

Pulaski, Va. had two full ones on the 1st of May. Parkersburg and Charleston, West Virginia were on the right side of the ledger in spite of opposition from Bailey Bros. who had been first in and from Cole Bros. who had wait paper up for their showing three weeks following. King Bros. Circus was also in the state at the same time but no opposition was encountered with them.

McKeesport, Pa pulled good business in the face of rain and cold. The matinee was delayed here until 5:30 due to the weather. Local gendarmes caused some fuss here over chalking the poles. Charleroi three days prior had given the same full house treatment in identical weather despite the depression in the area caused by both coal and steel strikes. The next two weeks across Pennsylvania reported outstanding business at almost every date with Hazelton and Mt. Carmel both being three show days.

Entering New Jersey at New Brunswick on May 27th, the rains came once

This stake and chain truck with a boom for loading canvas was a converted army truck. Burt Wilson Collection.



The Chair semi was also formerly on the Beatty show. Burt Wilson Collection.



again but the Garden State again proved a show winner with two full houses at the first stand and continued business across the state for the week.

It was revealed at this time that the official family was not seeing eye to eye on many subjects and the announcement came on June 15th that Marshall Johnson and Ralph Clawson had both handed in their resignations on the 12th. No official reasons were given but the industry had been aware for some time that things were not going well. Edgar took over active management of the show and announced that he was heading for the New England states in long strides.

The show re-entered Pennsylvania for a two week swing through the hard coal regions. Business was average but current coal strikes had to take their toll of part of the expected business. The one solid winner was Scranton which was a three show day. Entering New York at Oneonta, the rains came down again and the crowd was estimated at a half house for the matinee. It cleared at night but competition from a ball game was the reason believed for the night house held to about 1200.

New England business started off on the spotty side after blowing the final New York stand at Hudson to a muddy lot. Pittsfield, Mass. was okay in the rain but Taunton produced poor business with competition from a carny being blamed. Other Mass. stands were only average and after making one stop in New Hampshire at Dover, the show entered Maine for a two week swing. This is the one state that the old time Sparks show usually could outdraw an other title with no quarter asked or given. Although known as a poor show state by most shows the Sparks title here is magic. The second day in the state proved it again with Biddleford coming up with two straw houses. Competition developed however when Floyd King routed his new King Bros. Circus through the same area. King showed Skowhegan only two days behind Sparks and several other stands were up for grabs. The expected billing war took place and competition was very sharp.

The reported results were about a toss up. Sparks drew capacity business at Augusta. At Lewistown the day previous, the show broke in a new lot to fair business. A two day stand at Portland came up with three full houses and one half house. Bangor was a four show day for Sparks on July 16th and the King show coming in two days later had a three show day. Some credit for Sparks business here was that this is the home town of Vic Robbins.



After almost two months of dry weather the rains came again upon re-entering Mass. Worcester and Lowell both had damp days but produced fair business. Leaving New England, the show made a long week-end jump from Waterbury, Conn. to Trenton, New Jersey stopping overnight on the fairgrounds at Flemington, N. J. Trenton produced the poorest days business of the entire season. All three New Jersey towns were poor. One stand in Delaware and two in Maryland preceded the shows return to the Southern area with the first stop on this leg of the tour being Alexandria, Va. on August 6th.

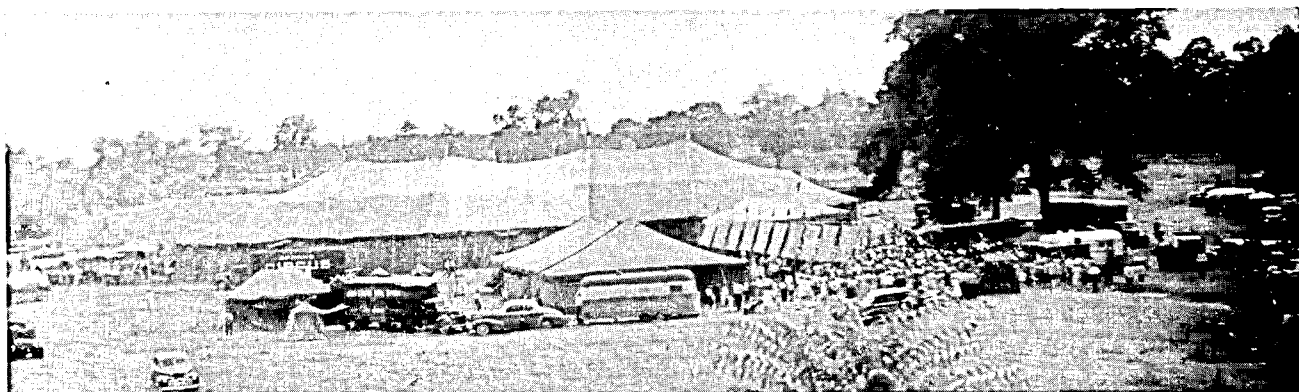
Meanwhile speculation was rife over some expected upcoming changes since Edgar had left the show and was seen in Chicago visiting with Art Concello. Concello was in the process of selling out his interest in the Clyde Beatty Circus to Beatty. That show was having one of the most prosperous tours of any circus in recent history. It was known too that Edgar visited James A. Haley, then manager of Ringling-Barnum, from whom the Sparks title was on lease. In addition to the title, the wardrobe, the two bulls and the cat act were in the deal. Also visited by Edgar on this tour was S. T. Jessop of the U.S. Tent and Awning Co. Edgar was quoted at this

time as having said he felt that the reception given the show by the public and many city officials proved the show had not been forgotten. He also reported that since getting away from a wet Spring and having whittled down the nut, the show had made money and that he further admitted to having ideas of making the show bigger and better.

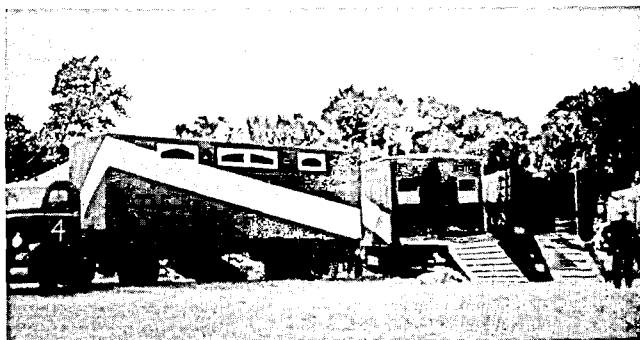
Proceeding further South, the show had a capacity matinee and over 1,000 turned away at the night show. High winds were given as the reason for not proceeding with a second night show. The second day in town also was a winner with excellent press given as the reason plus a local tie-in with a dairy concern on kids promotion. Emporia was so-so and moving on into North Carolina, Roanoke Rapids had rain in the afternoon and a full house at night. Two satisfactory houses at Rocky Mount and two near capacity crowds at Raleigh followed. In the Bright Leaf Tobacco Belt the old title was not forgotten and with tobacco and other crops bringing in all time high prices, the show stood to profit. New Bern, N. C. tallied a full matinee and a turnaway night. Wilmington had two full ups and Lumberton was reported on the winning side. Following three weeks in N. C. the show moved into South Carolina with stands in Greenville, for three shows, Anderson to a pair of fair houses and moderate business at Laurens, Greenwood and Aiken.

Augusta, Ga. drew two capacities and Millegville had a fair matinee and full night. The show jumped into the old Sparks winterquarters town of Macon and was warmly greeted by the folks in the community who recalled the balmy days of the famous title. Playing on the old quarters lot at Central City Park, the show had an overflow matinee in wind and rain and over 500 turned away at night. Treasurer Arnold Maley estimated the show had a \$6,000 day. This matched the figure reported by Austin Bros. in 1945 when the show had their biggest day of the season in Macon. Tifton came up cold and rainy and poor business but Savannah was okay. Thomasville and Bainbridge were satisfactory but Moultrie was lousy in the rain and

A general view of the lot in Springfield, Mass. showing the square end side show top and the odd middle piece in the big top. Burt Wilson Collection.







These three stock trucks were owned by Paul Lewis and carried his horses and ponies. Burt Wilson Collection.

Albany not too good being only four days behind Bailey Bros.

Dipping into Florida for one stand at Tallahassee to good biz, the route now turned West for stands in Alabama and Tennessee with three dates in the former and eleven in the latter.

On Oct. 19th, Marshall Green who had stayed on only as general agent, revealed that the show would close at Tyler, Texas on Nov. 4th and that it would return to winterquarters at Sarasota. Also released about this time was the fact that P. A. McGrath who had been working for the Sun Oil Company has been contacted in Trenton, New Jersey in July and that he would come on and supervise the conversion of the show from trucks to rails for the 1947 season. McGrath had at one time been trainmaster on Cole Bros. Circus and was considered an excellent choice to frame the shows new rail equipment.

A week in Louisiana towns followed with stops at Bastrop, Monroe, Ruston, Minden, Matchitoches and Leesville. No reports of business were issued during this period.

Sparks now entered Texas for the first time in the history of the shows title with the first stop at Orange. This was a good day with fair matinee and every ticket torn at night. Beaumont followed with a light day in hot weather. A ferry move to Galveston was made overnight with an opening day night show only and two shows the following day to okay business. Conroe and Huntsville were only average but Bryan was better with a full night house. The balance of the Texas tour was very spotty and the show closed on Nov. 4th at Tyler to two turnaways in a downpour.

The following day it was revealed that the shows two leased bulls had been loaded in a baggage car along with some show owned props and shipped to Sarasota via the Cotton Belt, Frisco, Southern and Seaboard railroads. Most trucks were to be sold locally and Emil Schweyer bought the big top, grandstand chairs and some other equipment for his American Circus then in South America. Edgar also announced that he and his key

staff members were leaving for Sarasota to start building a new rail show to be launched the following Spring.

Walter Nealand acting in behalf of the circus also released the following news to be used for The Billboard publication. "P. A. McGrath, who will be trainmaster, is now in Memphis, Tenn. supervising the construction by the Lewis-Deisel Supply Co. of 21 streamlined steel and aluminum wagons.

Flat cars have been delivered by the Warren Tank Car Co., (the number was not stated), and three sleepers just out of service of the Atlantic Coast Line are already in Sarasota.

Canvas for next year including a four pole big top, will be ready for Spring delivery. The show will add a menagerie top and plans to carry six cages of wild animals as well as elephants and other stock.

Denny T. Helms has been retained as general superintendent and Red Lunsford will be equestrian director and also have the concert.

Framed last Spring largely on equipment assembled by James Edgar for a projected ice show under canvas and reviving the Sparks title after 15 years of inactivity, the show opened at Arcadia, Fla. on March 22nd. Edgar became top man in June after the withdrawal of Marshall Johnson as president and Ralph Clawson as Vice President. Johnson was interested in the venture financially and Clawson played an important role in putting the show together. Frequent revisions were made in the performance but after the shifts in personnel in the early part of the season, comparatively few changes took place among the staff and department heads.

Edgar states that he was well satisfied with the results of the 1946 tour and that plans for the new rail show are maturing.

Piloted by Marshall Grees, as general agent, the show played a total of 177 towns in 20 states. Five stands were for two days and the rest all one day. The seasons route card total mileage is 9204 which is increased to 10,336 with the home run to Sarasota.

Two stands were lost during the season, Hudson, N. Y. on June 18th and Conroe, Texas on Oct. 25th. Thanks to



Victor Robbins and the big show band. Bob Good Photo from author's collection.

Supt. Helms, all matinees were on time except three and despite plenty of bad weather and a shortage of help.

The seasons closing was one of the best. Show was in the process of setting up when one of the worst storms of the month hit. Fortunately the big top was not up and the only damage was the cookhouse top which was torn to shreds. Continued heavy rainfall all day failed to dampen the spirits of the circus hungry crowd and the matinee was a turnaway. As early as 6:00 p.m. the midway was filled and at 7:30 the big top was strawed and the wagon was closed. Plans to give a second night show were cancelled because of high winds and Mgr. Edgar refunded over 700 tickets." This is the end of a rather lengthy quote.

Victor Robbins band had played "Auld Lang Syne" and the 1946 tour was over.

Winterquarters was established on 33rd St. opposite the Ringling School of Art in Sarasota. The shows business office moved into location in down town Sarasota and was placed under the control of Arnold Maley and James Mills. Walter Nealand was placed in charge of working up press material for the coming season. Quarters preparation for the coming season was announced as getting under way about December 1st with Denny Helms in command and Red Lunsford placed in charge of stock including the breaking of five new liberty horses recently purchased by Edgar.

Further announcements before the years end revealed that the show had signed a five year lease with the Venice, Fla. City Council for the use of a repair hanger and two T barracks at the Venice Airport. The Sarasota Tribune telling of the planned winter quarters move and the conversion to rails announced further that the show would open the 1947 tour about March 15th in the Sarasota area.

The details of the final season of the James Edgar's Sparks Circus including the detailed information on the new wagons and train will be published in a future edition of the Bandwagon along with credits for those who have proffered their assistance.



# SPARKS CIRCUS— SEASON OF 1946

March	22	Arcadia, Fla.	55 miles
	23	Wauchula, Fla.	25 miles
	24	SUNDAY	
	25	Bradenton, Fla.	55 miles
	26	Plant City, Fla.	55 miles
	27	Lakeland, Fla.	12 miles
	28	Barton, Fla.	15 miles
	29	Winter Haven, Fla.	11 miles
	30	Kissimmee, Fla.	31 miles
	31	SUNDAY	
April	1	Orlando, Fla.	19 miles
	2	Sanford, Fla.	21 miles
	3	Ocala, Fla.	71 miles
	4	Gainesville, Fla.	37 miles
	5	Green Cove Spring, Fla.	54 miles
	6	Fernandina, Fla.	60 miles
	7	Sunday, enroute	
	8	Monday, enroute	
	9	Charleston, S. C.	256 miles
	10	Orangeburg, S. C.	73 miles
	11	Columbia, S. C.	40 miles
	12	Sumter, S. C.	44 miles
	13	Florence, S. C.	39 miles
	14	SUNDAY	
	15	Charlotte, N. C.	148 miles
	16	Salisbury, N. C.	40 miles
	17	High Point, N. C.	36 miles
	18	Greensboro, N. C.	17 miles
	19	Durham, N. C.	54 miles
	20	Wilson, N. C.	65 miles
	21	SUNDAY	
	22	Norfolk, Va.	175 miles
	23	Norfolk, Va.	
	24	Portsmouth, Va.	7 miles
	25	Newport News, Va.	22 miles
	26	Newport News, Va.	
	27	Petersburg, Va.	72 miles
	28	SUNDAY	
	29	Lynchburg, Va.	127 miles
	30	Roanoke, Va.	53 miles



May	1	Pulaski, Va.	60 miles
	2	Bluefield, W. Va.	69 miles
	3	Beckley, W. Va.	50 miles
	4	Charleston, W. Va.	46 miles
	5	Charleston, W. Va.	
	6	Huntington, W. Va.	50 miles
	7	Parkersburg, W. Va.	83 miles
	8	Clarksburg, W. Va.	79 miles
	9	Uniontown, Pa.	72 miles
	10	Charleroi, Pa.	35 miles
	11	Wierton, W. Va.	55 miles
	12	SUNDAY	
	13	E. Liverpool, Ohio	30 miles
	14	McKeesport, Pa.	63 miles
	15	Greensburg, Pa.	15 miles
	16	Latrobe, Pa.	12 miles
	17	Johnstown, Pa.	40 miles
	18	Altoona, Pa.	44 miles
	19	SUNDAY	
	20	Williamsport, Pa.	93 miles
	21	Shamokin, Pa.	49 miles
	22	Mt. Carmel, Pa.	8 miles
	23	Shenandoah, Pa.	15 miles
	24	Hazlet, Pa.	18 miles
	25	E. Stroudsburg, Pa.	55 miles
	26	SUNDAY	
	27	New Brunswick, N. J.	80 miles
	28	Long Branch, N. J.	64 miles
	29	Red Bank, N. J.	7 miles
	30	Asbury Park, N. J.	12 miles
	31	Freehold, N. J.	14 miles
June	1	Sommerville, N. J.	40 miles
	2	SUNDAY	
	3	Phonerville, Pa.	72 miles
	4	Coatesville, Pa.	30 miles
	5	Pottstown, Pa.	18 miles
	6	Lebanon, Pa.	47 miles
	7	Pottsville, Pa.	51 miles
	8	Lehigh, Pa.	30 miles
	9	SUNDAY	
	10	Tamaqua, Pa.	18 miles
	11	Mahonay City, Pa.	18 miles
	12	W. Pittston, Pa.	57 miles
	13	Scranton, Pa.	10 miles
	14	Endicott City, N. Y.	41 miles
	15	Sidney, N. J.	38 miles
	16	SUNDAY	
	17	Oneonta, N. Y.	24 miles
	18	Hudson, N. Y.	82 miles
	19	Pittsfield, Mass.	43 miles
	20	Northampton, Mass.	43 miles
	21	Holyoke, Mass.	10 miles
	22	Framingham, Mass.	85 miles

	23	SUNDAY	
	24	Brockton, Mass.	40 miles
	25	Taunton, Mass.	20 miles
	26	N. Attleboro, Mass.	18 miles
	27	Salem, Mass.	60 miles
	28	Gloucester, Mass.	22 miles
	29	Newburyport, Mass.	20 miles
	30	SUNDAY	
July	1	Lawrence, Mass.	24 miles
	2	Dover, N. H.	48 miles
	3	Sanford, Me.	28 miles
	4	Biddleford, Me.	19 miles
	5	Portland, Me.	15 miles
	6	Portland, Me.	
	7	SUNDAY	
	8	Brunswick, Me.	30 miles
	9	Lewiston, Me.	25 miles
	10	Augusta, Me.	35 miles
	11	Rockland, Me.	42 miles
	12	Belfast, Me.	26 miles
	13	Waterville, Me.	65 miles
	14	SUNDAY	
	15	Dover, Foxcroft, Me.	61 miles
	16	Bangor, Me.	41 miles
	17	Skowhegan, Me.	53 miles
	18	Livermore Falls, Me.	40 miles
	19	Mexico, Me.	31 miles
	20	Berlin, N. H.	51 miles
	21	SUNDAY	
	22	Manchester, N. H.	135 miles
	23	Lowell, Mass.	41 miles
	24	Worcester, Mass.	48 miles
	25	Springfield, Mass.	50 miles
	26	New Britain, Conn.	39 miles
	27	Waterbury, Conn.	26 miles
	28	SUNDAY	
	29	Trenton, N. J.	178 miles
	30	Camden, N. J.	39 miles
	31	Pennsgrove, N. J.	35 miles
Aug.	1	Dover, Del.	46 miles
	2	Salisbury, Md.	56 miles
	3	Cambridge, Md.	32 miles
	4	SUNDAY	
	5	Annapolis, Md.	70 miles
	6	Alexandria, Va.	32 miles
	7	Fredericksburg, Va.	50 miles
	8	Richmond, Va.	56 miles
	9	Richmond, Va.	
	10	Emporia, Va.	40 miles
	11	SUNDAY	
	12	Roanoke Rapids, N. C.	20 miles
	13	Rocky Mount, N. C.	43 miles
	14	Raleigh, N. C.	56 miles
	15	Fayetteville, N. C.	57 miles
	16	Lumberton, N. C.	33 miles
	17	Wilmington, N. C.	80 miles
	18	SUNDAY	
	19	New Bern, N. C.	87 miles
	20	Greenville, N. C.	43 miles
	21	Kinston, N. C.	28 miles
	22	Goldsboro, N. C.	27 miles
	23	Clinton, N. C.	37 miles
	24	Dun, N. C.	28 miles
	25	SUNDAY	
	26	Burlington, N. C.	104 miles
	27	Reidsville, N. C.	24 miles
	28	Winston-Salem, N. C.	42 miles
	29	Statesville, N. C.	50 miles
	30	Gastonia, N. C.	57 miles
	31	Gaffney, N. C.	31 miles
Sept.	1	SUNDAY	
	2	Greenville, S. C.	51 miles
	3	Anderson, S. C.	34 miles
	4	Laurens, S. C.	44 miles
	5	Greenwood, S. C.	26 miles
	6	Aiken, S. C.	55 miles
	7	Augusta, Ga.	16 miles
	8	SUNDAY	
	9	Milledgeville, Ga.	97 miles
	10	Macon, Ga.	33 miles
	11	Dublin, Ga.	55 miles
	12	Vidalia, Ga.	44 miles
	13	Statesboro, Ga.	45 miles
	14	Savannah, Ga.	63 miles
	15	SUNDAY	
	16	Douglas, Ga.	137 miles
	17	Fitzgerald, Ga.	34 miles
	18	Tifton, Ga.	28 miles
	19	Cordele, Ga.	41 miles
	20	Albany, Ga.	52 miles
	21	Moultrie, Ga.	46 miles
	22	SUNDAY	
	23	Valdosta, Ga.	45 miles
	24	Thomasville, Ga.	47 miles
	25	Tallahassee, Fla.	34 miles
	26	Bainbridge, Ga.	44 miles
	27	Dothan, Ala.	54 miles
	28	Andalusia, Ala.	81 miles
	29	SUNDAY	
	30	Mobile, Ala.	128 miles
Oct.	1	Gulfport, Miss.	78 miles
	2	Hattiesburg, Miss.	70 miles
	3	Columbia, Miss.	32 miles
	4	McComb, Miss.	43 miles

	5	Brookhaven, Miss.	26 miles
	6	SUNDAY	
	7	Canton, Miss.	81 miles
	8	Greenwood, Miss.	73 miles
	9	Clarksdale, Miss.	56 miles
	10	Cleveland, Miss.	35 miles
	11	Belzoni, Miss.	57 miles
	12	Greenville, Miss.	49 miles
	13	SUNDAY	
	14	Bastrop, La.	99 miles
	15	Monroe, La.	25 miles
	16	Ruston, La.	45 miles
	17	Minden, La.	43 miles
	18	Natchitoches, La.	73 miles
	19	Leesville, La.	50 miles
	20	SUNDAY	
	21	Orange, Tex.	106 miles
	22	Beaumont, Tex.	25 miles
	23	Galveston, Tex.	80 miles
		(nite only)	
	24	Galveston, Tex.	
	25	Conroe, Tex.	90 miles
	26	Huntsville, Tex.	30 miles
	27	SUNDAY	
	28	Bryan, Tex.	64 miles
	29	Cameron, Tex.	49 miles
	30	Waco, Tex.	55 miles
	31	Corsicana, Tex.	61 miles
Nov.	1	Palestine, Tex.	58 miles
	2	Jacksonville, Tex.	27 miles
	3	SUNDAY	
	4	Tyler, Tex.	
		SEASON ENDS	
		Total mileage for the season—9204.	
		Total mileage including home run to Sarasota, Fla.—10,336.	

## Clyde Beatty Cole Bros. Circus Blow-Down Photo's

Clear, Sharp, gloss 8x10 6 picture  
composit of Circus blow-down  
July 16, 1964. Winona, Minn.

\$2.00

ALSO

Complete set of 1964 Route Cards  
of Clyde Beatty Circus  
\$2.00

Write:

Kenneth Dodd  
Show Mail Agent  
4250 S. W. 8th St.  
Miami, Florida

## CIRCUS PHOTOS

4x5 Black and White  
Sharp, Clear, Top Quality  
Forepaugh-Sells

1903 . . . . . 9 pix \$1.75

Barnum & Bailey

1912 . . . . . 9 pix \$1.75

Walter L. Main wreck

1893 . . . . . 3 pix 60c

## BOOKS

Grock, King of Clowns . \$2.00  
Chipperfield Circus . . . 3.50  
Center Ring (Taylor) . . . 2.50  
Calif Pioneer Circus . . . 7.50  
Clown Act Omnibus . . . 4.95  
Story of Mr. Circus . . . 3.50

(Add 25c for postage  
and handling)

SEND FOR LISTS

Circusiana—books, magazines, photos,  
programs, etc.

35mm Slides—Colored circus slides

10c for each list

AL HALPERN

Bali Hai . . . . . 922 Park Circle  
Anaheim, Calif.





## Looking At Lithographs

By KENT GHIRARD

As a collector of many types of circusiana but as one who specializes in lithographs, I have observed over the years many rather amusing and interesting errors in the circus scenes pictured on these colorful posters. Many of you have probably noticed the same things but there may be some fans and col-

This 1931 Barnes litho shows the Gretona high wire act without balancing poles. A Ringling Barnum poster of the Wallendas in 1933 did show balancing poles.



lectors who would find these observations of interest.

We have all seen at some time a drawing of some scene titled "What's wrong with this picture?" The reader is supposed to see how many mistakes he can find, but the mistakes are put there on purpose. You could play the same game with many lithos and it's a lot of fun too. To begin with, we all know there has to be a certain amount of exaggeration in circus advertising, and I am not in this case going to pick apart such basic circus advertising tricks as increase in SIZE. This seems to be one of the most common gimmicks to make the potential customer stand wide-eyed gazing at the lavish pictorials plastered on the barns and fences and hung in the store windows, of days gone by. Even as late as the thirties, we had Goliath, the monster Sea Elephant, pictured about three times the height of his keeper, when actually they were about the same height. The immortal Garantua is pictured holding a native in one hand high over his head, like King Kong of the movies.

The lips on the posters of the Ubangis and the necks of the Giraffe necked women from Burma were about doubled in size and length from the real thing. But somehow we not only overlook these things but really rather enjoy them. I would like to call attention to some less obvious and less intentional errors in the drawing of circus posters.

We all love elephants and have seen many at work both in and out of the

ring. But a male elephant is something that is always given extra attention, for the simple reason that there are so few in any circuses. And the females, who do grow smaller tusks, invariably have these sawed off to a small nub for safety measures. Now take a look at almost ANY elephant act depicted on a circus poster. That's right . . . ALL of the bulls are shown sporting flashy pairs of white tusks. And how many of us have ever seen an elephant act where the bulls actually perform in their gaudy, spangled blankets? None of us, I'll bet, but you can see this in many lithos of performing bull acts.

In 1931 the Sells-Floto show came out with what was apparently special paper on their elephant act. It is a classic of its kind. The artist had a vivid imagination and must have been to few circuses, or had a very poor memory. Pictured are a total of twenty-four bulls performing in TWO rings, and with a total of FOUR handlers. Besides that, the center elephant of the pyramid is standing on top of another. I know of no record of this little trick having ever been accomplished.

This particular litho has quite a story, having been used on four of the major shows of the thirties. In the original S-F print the elephants trunks were actually printed over the title in several places. Then around 1934 the Barnes show used the same picture, but with a title strip pasted over the top and cut to snugly fit around the trunks. In 1938 Robbins Bros. used the same picture with their

A riding act poster usually shows the horse with all four feet off the ground as does this 1929 Ringling litho.



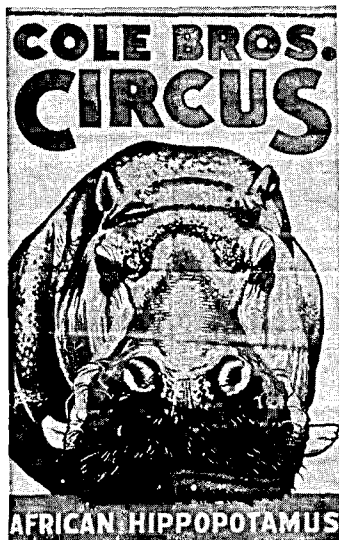


title and here the trunks are printed over the lettering. In 1941, Cole Bros. also used this litho and again it gave the appearance of special paper. It is likely that Cole used this pictorial earlier than 1941 as most of the Robbins paper of 1938 was Cole paper retitled.

It is a well known fact that many lithos were directly copied from publicity photos. These of course should show few errors of any sort unless the artist was especially careless. One well known example of a litho copied from a photo is the Cole of the hippo with the two small children on it's back.

Then we come to the very popular train unloading pictures. Many shows used this as special paper, and it was always a real eye-catcher. But have you ever seen the horses, elephants, camels and animal men, unloading in FULL Spec. costume? Of course, this was done to bring more excitement and color to the picture.

One type of pictorial which had a minimum of errors was the jungle scene, or the individual animal. These are always popular and in most cases quite accurate. In my personal observation I would say the Hippo has proved to be the most used single animal on circus posters, in a jungle setting. It is interesting to note the construction of the cages shown in the many lithos of menagerie scenes. Invariably they are of cracker-box construction, with no cross bars,



The hippo seems to be the most popular animal for lithos. This 1940 Cole poster is unusual in that it shows a front view without the usual open mouth.

probably so that the animals could be seen more clearly.

Around 1931 the Barnes show had special paper on the Great Gretona high wire act, and the group is pictured at the top of the tent but without any balancing poles. A neat trick if it could be done. About ten years later Cole had paper on the same group, but with the

balancing poles. And then there is the flying act. Take a look at almost any poster of a flying act and note carefully the catcher's legs. Chances are they are just hooked over the trapeze bar at the knee, without any extra support bars. Never are they wrapped around the padded rope or cable as they are in real life. To catch a flyer with legs like this would result in two bouncing bodies in the net.

Today's white faced clowns almost always have white over the upper lip, using red on the lower lip only. This gives a much more ludicrous and effective appearance, and in fact for any white faced joey to have red all over his mouth is a sure sign of an amateur. But hardly a poster has been drawn without the FULL red mouth of the clown. It is true that fifty years ago some clowns did use the full mouth, but I am referring to posters of the past thirty years or so.

Last of all we come to the subject of the bare back act, and horses in general. This is a subject dear to my heart as I am a horse lover and have two of my own. Look at any photograph of a running horse, and you will note that never does the horse have two front legs stretched out front and the hind legs stretched way out in back. It is physically impossible for a horse to travel this way. But from the very earliest posters of horses, and I mean well before the turn of the century, it was the style to picture the

# CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

from

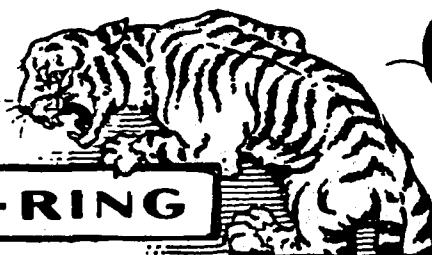
AND

**SELLS**

**GRAY**



**THREE-RING**



**CIRCUS**

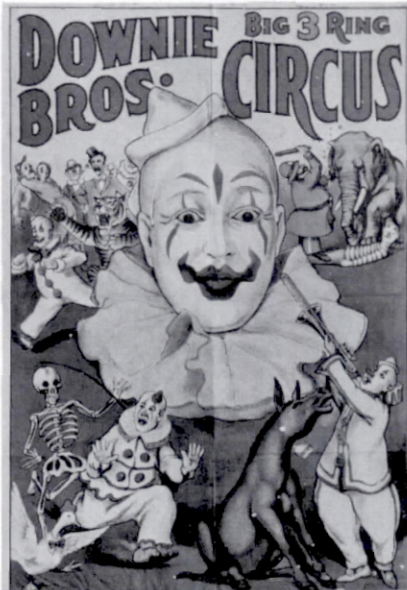




All four of the catchers seem to be working from a flybar in this 1937 Tom Mix poster.

horse running flat out in the manner described. Also, many bareback horses are pictured without curb reins and of a build more like a race horse. True, it makes a prettier picture than the heavy-barreled typical resinback, but it most certainly is not true to life. And why must ALL bareback riders be standing on tip toe? There are few who can do it, and if so it is only for a matter of seconds.

A Ringling-Barnum litho of 1929 illustrates many errors evident in bareback scenes. The thoroughbred type brown horse is running flat out, belly almost to the ground, with no bridle or curb of any kind, while FIVE lovely damsels are perched on it's back. At least they



This 1936 Downie litho shows the typical full mouth the litho artist invariably gave the clown.

are NOT on their toes, but the solo rider in the background is.

And while on the subject of riders, it is interesting to note that often a poster artist would copy an older type poster,



The sea elephant exhibited by the Ringling Barnum show in 1928 was large, but not one fourth as big as indicated in this lithograph.

but bring it up to date. An old May Wirth scene with a clown presenting the rider with a bouquet, was re-drawn as special paper for Cole Bros. In 1935. Another May Wirth picture standing with her white horse was almost exactly copied but with Rose Rieffenach as the rider, for RBBB in the early thirties.

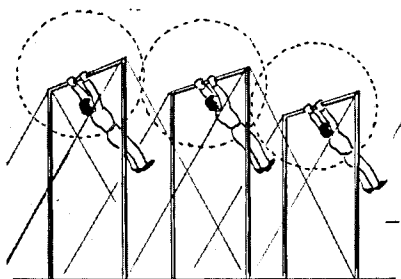
I am sure readers and fans could find many more flaws than I have mentioned here, and it is a lot of fun and tests one's background of show knowledge. But don't for one minute think I am writing this in the form of criticism. It's all a part of the great art of circus advertising, and I'm very happy to have these circus lithographs just as they are!





# Truth or Fiction

## Legend or Fact



By PIERRE COUDERC

*"This act which we have just witnessed, with others of varying characters, requires for its execution technical perfection as well as super-physical qualities in the performer beyond that demanded by any and all forms of art; for life and limb are involved as well as pride of professional of of artistic accomplishment."*

Irving K. Pond

### THE THREE BARS

(LES BARRES FIXES)

Obviously the above quotation is applicable to all circus performers. But it becomes even more relevant—almost axiomatic—regarding the artists who perform that most difficult and most hazardous branch of acrobatics named: The Three Bars!

It is indeed deplorable that this speciality, which once was considered a standard attraction on all circus programs, has been steadily falling into decadence.

Though still considered by pros and connoisseurs as "the *nerve*" of circus ring artistry, the three bars are seldom seen nowadays. Once upon a time there were literally countless triple bar acts flooding every circus ring here and abroad. Today only a mere handful can be found performing this old acrobatic standard.

Why? What are the reasons for this deplorable decline?

Two of the more obvious factors can be cited:

1. the uninitiated spectator, rarely aware of the intricacies involved in this type of performance, lacks

a proper sense of appreciation.

2. the performer, aware of this lack of appreciation, has found it more rewarding to devote himself to much less exigent fields—such as the flying trapezes or teeterboard, either of which always trigger more applause than the best of bar acts.

Perhaps, to a degree, our circus historians and chroniclers can be held accountable for this lack of appreciation from the average spectator. For some strange reason difficult to fathom, most of our circus writers have always devoted a disproportionate amount of space extolling the feats of the flying trapezist, while sadly neglecting those of the barrist who, ironically, is by far the greatest of the two artists.

For those who may be inclined to scoff at the above contention, it can be pointed out that almost any barrist can switch over to the fly-bar and, in a relatively short time, become an accomplished performer in that speciality. Inversely, only a very few of the trapezists were ever able to switch over to the bars without spending months—and even years—of gruelling practice.

Famous barrists such as Phillip Shenvette, Enrico Diaz, Raoul Monbar, The Ibarra Bros., The Ivanoffs, (also known as Pavlovs) and many others experienced no difficulty in adjusting to the differences of tempo, timing, rhythm and detentes in order to become proficient on the fly-bar. However, just how many trapezists can be named who became experts on the triple bars?

Audiences' preference for the trapezist over the barrist is understandable. The height and length of the trapeze tra-

The Egelton's, about 1907, Alfred Court, left, Gavazza, center and Jules Court on right. Photo from Henry Thetard's *La Merveilleuse Histoire du Cirque*.



jectories are not only more spectacular than those of the barrist but also more graceful, creating the impression that it is more daring, more difficult and more aesthetic. The truth is: Almost every routine of the barrist is not only much more difficult to perform but also much more dangerous.

On the bars, the performer can no longer depend on the swing of the trapeze to furnish him the momentum with which to launch himself into the air. Here, he must generate his own momentum out of his own muscular strength. On the trapeze, "timing" depends mostly on the "whip" of the legs, back and neck. On the bars, not only those same "whips" are also necessary (though sharper and faster) but the barrist must include other complexities such as the pulls and pushes from the arms, and abrupt stops from the wrists and forearms, all of which require the muscles, sinews, and stamina of a super athlete.

Of all the various phases of acrobatics, none can be named that present so many difficulties, ruggedness and danger. ALFRED COURT, "barrist emeritus", once succinctly but aptly described it: "Being a barrist is a painful occupation." Indeed it is! Artistry on the three bars is difficult because any and all timings, reflexes and detentes must be executed with such precision that they require years of practice. It is also true that, with the bars, a performer must be endowed with more than just muscular



The Loretta Twins, Pauline, left and Ora Norine in 1914 while with Barnum & Bailey Circus. From the Frank Robie Collection.

strength and agility. Besides those two important attributes, the barrist must also possess: a will of iron, nerves of steel, and instantaneous reflexes from which follow instantaneous detentes.

On the trapeze, a flyer's rhythm, tempo and timing flow relatively "moderato"; on the bars, these have to be at least "allegretto" — and at times even "veloce". Indeed the barrist must possess many attributes — including an utter contempt for danger! When a fly-trap leaper misses his catch, usually the only injury he suffers is to his professional pride, for he lands safely (at least most often) in the net beneath. But when a barrist launches himself into a pass from the 1st to 3rd bar while turning a somersault over the 2nd, an error of a fraction of a second can spell serious injury and even death — for if he releases the bar too soon, he will be projected against the 2nd bar; and if he releases it too late, he will fall onto it from above.

Being a barrist is indeed a painful occupation. Technically, it is much more difficult than any other form of acrobatics because every somersault, whether a back or a forward, must be a "gainer" and/or, when not a "gainer" it must be "counter-timed", which makes it even more difficult to execute.

After pondering over such intricacies,

perhaps the circophile will begin to perceive how and why, in an era when most people are inclined to take the line of least resistance, the triple bar acts are swiftly disappearing from our circus programs. But even though the spectators will continue to applaud the trapezist and the historians and chroniclers will continue to extoll the latter's achievements, among professionals it is the barrist who will continue to be regarded as "the acme" of all circus artists!

Parenthetically, it should also be mentioned that, with the bars, some routines which sometimes look the most difficult may be the easiest and, vice-versa, others which may appear the simplest may be the most difficult and/or dangerous. For example: A pass from the 1st to 3rd bar with a back somersault is much more spectacular but less difficult than the same pass without the somersault, for the latter requires such a formidable "counter-timing" on the performer's part that only a few barrists such as ENRICO DIAZ and ALFRED COURT were able to execute it flawlessly.

Again, using the same pass as an illustration, a back somersault while passing from the 1st to 3rd bar is also more dangerous than doing it with a "half-twister" — though the latter appears more difficult. The single is more dangerous because if for any reason the performer lacks sufficient height while passing over the 2nd bar, he risks cracking his skull against that 2nd bar. With a "half-twist", the pass becomes somewhat like a long "fly-over", where in instead of catching the 2nd bar, the performer is able to catch the 3rd bar from underneath.

Because of the danger involved in all three types of passes from the 1st to 3rd bar, some performers use a dismountable 2nd bar, which is removed for this particular routine. Again, from the spectator's point of view, this removal of the 2nd bar enhances rather than lessens the effect, for it focuses the spectator's attention to the distance between the two end bars, making it appear more spectacular and seemingly more dangerous.

Our circus historians, past and present, are not in complete accord regarding the origin of the triple bar act. There are some who contend that LAUCK & FOX created that speciality back in 1875 — and later were performing it in Paris in 1878. Others claim that the team of BERLI, LEACH & FOSTER originated it in England around 1864; while still others credit the HANLON BROS. for the innovation at some earlier date.

Which of these — if any — is correct is not of much consequence. Feats on the horizontal bar date back to the antiquity of Athens and Rome. Whoever was first in lumping three horizontal bars together is not of much import. The point of

importance is that artistry on the triple bars requires more physical ability, skill, intelligence, determination and showmanship than any other phase of acrobatics — to say nothing of years of strenuous and arduous practice.

As mentioned before, once upon a time there were countless barrists risking life and limb performing on the bars. At the beginning most of the routines consisted of straight swings, seat-jumps, step-offs, etc. Then gradually followed the greater evolutions such as the belly and giant-swing passes, some with back and/or forward somersaults, other with full twisters. Eventually came the series of "banolas" ("fly-overs"), combinations of passes including old and new wrinkles, finally culminating with the passes from the 1st to 3rd bar, with final "break-aways" (fly-aways) either with "lay-out" singles or double backs or double forwards to the ground. Artists such as ALFRED COURT, ANDRES ATAYDE and some of the old masters would have considered themselves second rate performers had they terminated every one of their routines with less than a double to the ground.

To compile a roster of all the barrists who performed during the era between the late 1800's and early 1900's would fill pages. But, from the so many, perhaps the cream of the crop ought to be mentioned. In Europe were such reknown numbers as the EGELTONS, LUPPUS, MARCOUS, DIONNES, HUGGOSSETS, FERNANDEZES, POPPESCU, AVOLOS, JUPITERS and many more too numerous to list. In the States were such remarkable performers as the DUNHAMS, VAN AUKENS, EUGENES, ASHTON BROS., NELSON & HILL, NEWELL & SHEVETTE, WORLAND TRIO, LEMOYNE BROS. and a host of others also too numerous to mention.

Out of this multitude of barrists must be singled out one extraordinary bar act which appeared during the 1910 period with the Barnum & Bailey and other circuses of the States. These were: THE LORETTA TWINS! They were indeed extraordinary — because they were girls! Not only were they young, petite and attractive, but these two feminine performers could execute the same difficult routines as the very best of the males!

This no doubt would have been a shock to the famous Alfred Court who always contended: "—the horizontal bars is one phase of acrobatics forbidden to the weaker sex, because it is too difficult, too arduous and too dangerous."

There is more truth than poetry to Court's sagacious contention. Even among the males it isn't every performer that is endowed with all the necessary attributes to become a master barrist. In other fields there have been a few female performers who succeeded in equaling the males — as has been proven by



such brilliant artists as May Wirth on a rosinback, Antoinette Concello on the fly-traps, Ala Naito on the wire, and Lillian Lietzel on the rings. But when it comes to the three bars, Court's contention holds true—except for that rare exception: The Loretta Twins, who could duplicate any routine executed by any man, including the pass from the 1st to 3rd bar, followed by a double to the ground!

How those two girls—then only in their 20's—ever acquired the skill, rhythm, strength and stamina to perform such feats is incredible! Had Alfred Court ever seen those Loretta Twins perform, he would have been bug-eyed!

From among so many barrists it was inevitable that imagination would eventually create many innovations. What with the flying trapezes evolving into vogue, the triple bar artists began inaugurating variations of their own such as: the "cradle" with a catcher set high either between two bars or in the place of the 3rd bar; the combination bar-and-trapeze, with such variations as bar-to trapeze-to-cradle passes; and the trampoline either under three bars and/or anyone of the cradle combinations.

Needles to say that any and all of those new variations made it possible for the barrists to execute many new spectacular routines! Nevertheless, when it came to public applause, the very best of them still could not compete with the trapezists. But then it was also inevitable that some imaginative barrist would eventually "reach for the moon"—by rigging his three bars high in the air over the same net used by the trapezists. Thus came the birth of the aerial bars!

Who was the first barrist to conceive this innovation has never been settled with any degree of certainty. European historians are inclined to credit AVOLOS, while their American colleagues claim that as far back as 1891, such acts as PETIT, MCVEY & RYAN, PRIMROSE & PICKETT and DUNHAM & MARLO were already presenting the aerial bars in the States, as high as 20 feet above a net stretched 10 feet above ground.

It would be difficult to dispute either claim, for the existing documentation is too fragmentary to ascertain who did what and when—and a present day research of the chronicles of three quarters of a century ago also fails to disclose anything relevant that would verify the facts and/or discard the fiction.

Only one major fact has been ascertained. After the first aerial bar act had made its initial appearance, it was but a short time later that a veritable host of imitators moved their three bars from terra firma to higher and higher riggings over a net. Some like TROJAN LUPPU, VERMETTE & DIONNE, VLADIMIR POPPESCU and RUDOLF EGELMAN remained "purists" of the original art.

But many others added routines with the "cradle" to their repertoires. At one time, the Luppus extended their rigging to as many as 9 bars. Much later, the IBARRA BROS. went to 5 bars—with 2 of them straddling above the 3 below. In between, the AVOLOS had even gone to the extreme of setting up some of their bars vertically!

Perhaps the most sensational combination of aerial display was the one created by Alfred Court, then known as THE EGELTONS. Around 1907, when Alfred and his brother Jules presented their first circus in Marseilles, he organized what can be labelled the most complicated aerial rigging ever witnessed above a circus ring!

In the very center of the rigging were the customary 3 bars, plus a catcher's cradle at each end. From the one cradle, the JUPITERS did their routines, while the Egeltons simultaneously duplicated the same routines from the other cradle. From the 3 center bars, both Alfred Court and ALFRED LEXTON also executed their peerless feats, plus a number of passes from the end bars to their respective catchers on the cradles. Whatever has ever been accomplished on the triple bars and/or the cradle, all six of those remarkable barrists executed any and all of the most difficult routines with the precision of masters!—which each was.

But to further enhance the display, the flying trapezes of THE 3 RAINATS were also rigged crosswise of the bars, making their flying passes under the bars! To top all this, Madame Rainat and La Corsari, two attractive aerialists, did single traps routines above the other 9 performers! To this day, there never has been such a display of variety put together into one single aerial act! And when one considers the artistry of each of the 11 performers, this was indeed the most sensational aerial act ever displayed!

Whether on the ground or high above the net, there have been many outstanding bar acts—especially during the first 4 decades of the century. It would be difficult to forget such peerless artists as NEWELL & SHEVETTE, THE DIONNES, EGELTONS, DIMITRESCUS, LUPPUS AND POPPESCU; or the PEERLESS-POTTERS, LOS HERMANOS ATAYDE, and their equally famous relatives, the IBARRA BROS.—each of the last three mentioned having been at one time or other declared "the Codonas of the three bars."

But alas! All of those fabulous performers belong to the yesteryears—and today there is hardly a handful to take their places. Today one can count on one hand the number of bar acts which are worthy of mention—though not a single one of them could begin to compare with their predecessors. During the past decade can only be listed as worthy of



Phillip Shevette, seated, Claude Newell, center and Zenoble Shevette, known as the Orloff Bros. as they appeared in the late 1890s in Europe and the United States. Photo courtesy of Raymond Melzora.

## Circus

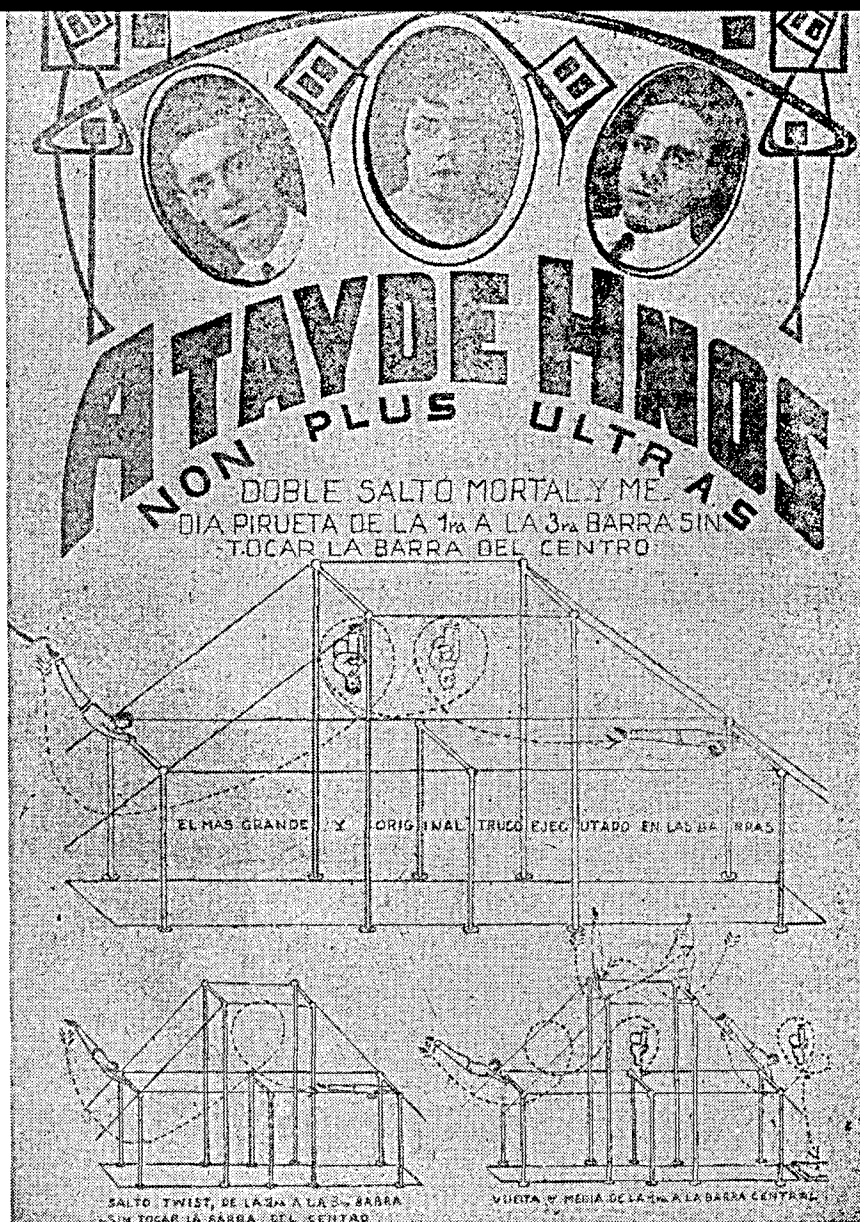
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The Andres Atayde bar act, of the early 1920s, as shown in the 1946 Atayde Circus program. Pfening Collection.

mention: THE 3 DINATS, THE 5 PETROFFS, THE OLVERA TRIO, THE 7 IVANOFFS, THE MASKATAN TRIO, THE 4 TSCHISKYS, and the 5 RODRIGUEZES. We must exclude the 3 Ibarra Bros. from the list, inasmuch as, since switching to the flying traps, they no longer perform on the bars.

Among the modern chroniclers there are some who have reported that the Dinats are in a class with the Peerless-Potters; also that either the Maskatan Trio and the Olvera Trio can be favorably compared with the Ibarra Bros. But such flowery reports have to be considered on the basis of the reporter's knowledge of the art. To be sure, any and all of the above named acts were good. In fact, today they can be considered outstanding. But among professionals who know the difference between adequacy and excellence, it would be difficult to find anyone who could consider any of those modern

barrists in the same class as a Shevette, Diaz, Egelton, Dionne, Atayde, Ibarra, and many of the past masters.

During the past 3 or 4 years, each time the Russian Circus has presented the 5 NIKOLAYEVs, either in the States or in Europe, chroniclers have written reams of superlatives about that "flashy" circular bar number—extolling the accomplishments of those Soviet performers as though they were out of this world. But such glowing reports represent more fiction than facts. The truth is: either those chroniclers don't know a good barrist from a bad one; or they were so dazzled by the whirlwind novelty that their better judgment gave way to their emotions.

There is no question that the Nikolayevs are "crowd-pleasers," and that the act is a welcome and worthwhile novelty. And no one can deny that when those performers go into their rapid finale, it does dazzle audiences. But thundering plaudits aren't always the hallmark of a performer's artistry—as can be attested by the success of The Beatles. As

far as audiences are concerned, both The Beatles and the Nikolayevs are huge successes!—but that doesn't necessarily stamp either of them as "artists", per se.

When it comes to artistry on the horizontal bars, to consider The Nikolayevs in a class with such past masters as Shevette, Egelton, Luppu, Atayde or Ibarra, is almost sacrilegious! Novelty, speed and stamina they have. But these can never take the place of performing excellence, artistic elegance and aesthetic form. Why there are today countless amateurs whose performance on the bars eclipse that of the best of the Nikolayevs! Matter of fact, it is doubtful if any one of the Nikolayevs could win a bronze medal at the Olympics!

By now it is almost inevitable that the reader will be asking: From among the multitude of barrists that have performed during the past century, which of the virtuosos can be considered "The King?" Also: which ones of the so many succeeded in executing the triple?

Unlike the flying traps where Alfredo Codona was almost unanimously called "The King" (and he still is considered so by many) no barrist has ever been regarded as such by his peers. For anyone to attempt to single out one performer as "The King of Barrists" would probably start an international controversy of such magnitude as that which occurred during the early 1930's regarding the leapers from the big springboard.

Among professionals there are varying opinions as to which of the past and present artists could be considered the greatest of barrists—for while many excelled in one phase or other, none was perfect in all phases. For example, Carpati, Dionne and Avolo were masters in their flawlessly execution of consecutive backs from bar-to-bar; Marcou was reknown for creating his "banalos" (fly-overs) and executing these in series with perfect form; Diaz was the greatest with the simple pass from 1st to 3rd, which requires such a formidable "counter-timing"; Shevette and Court were famous for their dazzling, whirlwind combinations of passes and spectacular break-aways (fly-aways) with never anything less than doubles; Ignacio Ibarra for his flawless forwards from and to the same bar; Andres Atayde for his spectacular double from the 1st to 3rd bar; Luppu, Popescu and others, each for his particular speciality.

In short, while a dozen or so of the barrists of the past and present are rightfully entitled to the title of "great", not one of them can rightfully qualify to be considered "The King"—for none ever rose to such heights as to overshadow all others.

Some think that Andres Atayde and/or Phil Shevette deserve the honor because they are the only barrists who ever succeeded in passing from the 1st to 3rd bar with a double somersault, a feat

continued on page 23

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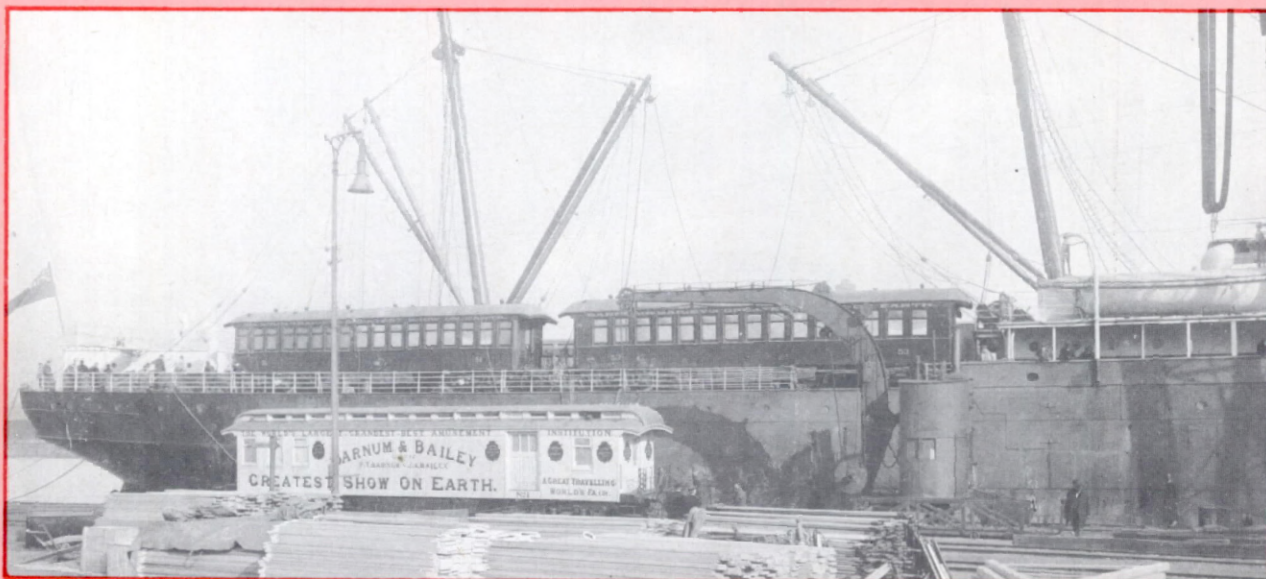
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# Some interesting photos from Bill Woodcock's collection

When the full history of American circuses is written, the author, whether he knows it or not, will owe an important part of his success to William H. Woodcock.



Barnum & Bailey unloading in Hamburg, Germany, 1900.



Forepaugh-Sells Circus, New York City, June 1910.



Barnum



Yankee



Great A





& Bailey water wagon early 1890s.



Ringling Bros. Circus parade 1897.



Robinson Circus midway around 1917.



Welsh Bros. Circus coach around 1903.



Alderfer Show, overland, 1914.



Al F. Wheeler's Shows around 1905.

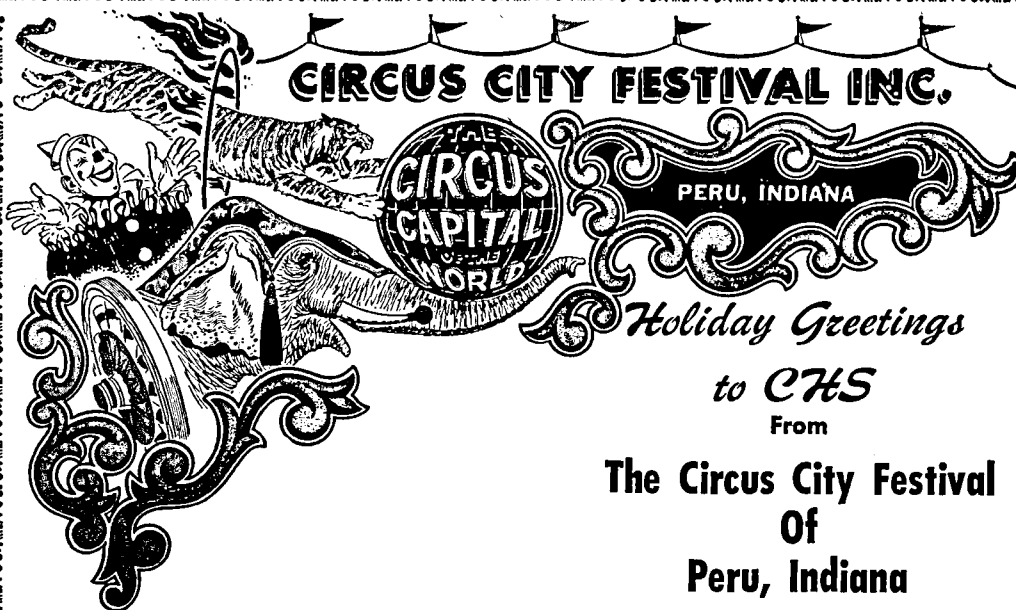


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considered more fiction than fact by most professionals. When Court was quizzed about this subject some years ago, he skeptically observed: "It's possible — but I would like to see it done."

The fact remains that it was done by PHIL SHEVETTE, (Newell & Shevette) as a regular routine presented at every performance during the month of May, 1896, when that team of barrists were billed at the Paris Folies Bergere. Also in 1892 at Woods' Gymnasium in New York City — during a contest between famous bar acts of that period.

This almost insuperable feat was also accomplished publicly and often during the years 1925 to 1928 by ANDRES ATAYDE (Atayde Bros.) when the latter was in his late teens in the early 20's — both in Europe and the Latin American countries. European circophiles of the 1927 period had an opportunity to witness the virtuosity of the Atayde Bros. when they performed in Lisbon, Madrid, Paris and other circuses of England, Italy, and the Scandinavian countries. Unfortunately, American circophiles were denied this privilege, for the Ataydes, somehow or other, never appeared in the States.

As of now, no other barrist has ever duplicated the feat — and it is doubtful that, considering the trends of modern times, any apprentice would be willing to submit himself to such a rigorous ordeal. But while the memory of either Phil Shevette or Andres Atayde performing this seemingly impossible feat lingers in the mind of those who happen to remember, it should be brought to mind that Aurelio Atayde, Andres' older brother, was even a greater barrist! The latter was not only a flawless performer, but his stamina and timing was prodigious! There was a time when he could consecutively execute as many as 40 "fly-overs" (banalds) without missing a beat! And while extolling the artistry of barrists, one must also list PATRICIA ATAYDE, sister of the Atayde Bros., who, like the Loretta Twins, was one female performed who could hold her own with most of the males!

Be that as it may, neither Phil Shevette's and/or the Ataydes' achievements, as outstanding as they are, would qualify either to be labelled "The King". To be sure, they were great. But not that much greater than a dozen or so others. And when it comes to listing those who succeeded in executing the triple from the three bars, the task is simplified because, incredible as it seems, actually only one barrist ever accomplished the feat as an integrated part of his regular performance.

It is true that Alfred Court (The Egeltons) when in his prime practiced the triple assiduously and daily for a period extending more than 6 months and covering more than 4000 attempts. To quote Court's own words from an excerpt on

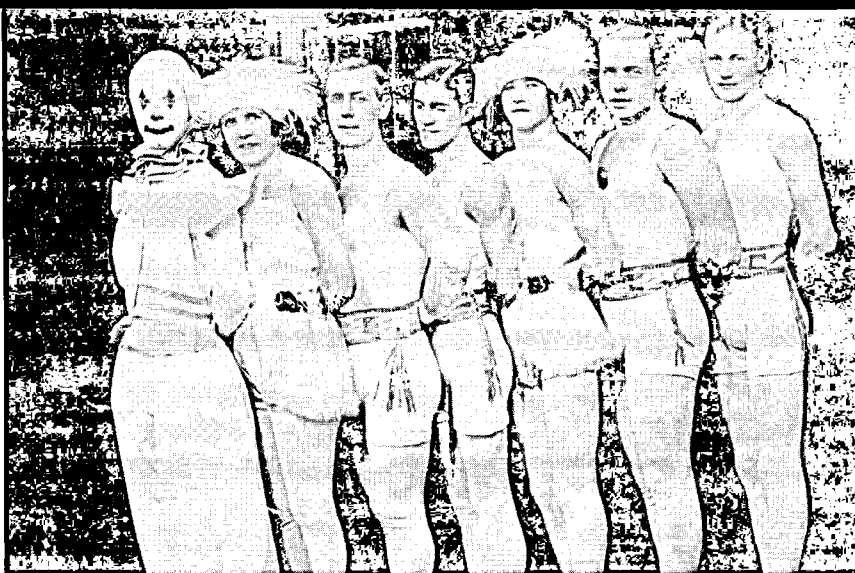
the subject: "... I practiced the triple — with the 'mechanic', of course — at least a dozen times daily for more than 6 months. Towards the last I was able to successfully turn it on an average of 10 times out of 12 with the 'mechanic' completely slack. However, there were always those 2 or 3 times when, if it hadn't been for the 'mechanic', I would have killed myself. Therefore, I can never really say that I did the triple — no more than can any other barrist or trapezist who has never mastered it sufficiently to execute it regularly as part of his daily routines in front of an audience."

The above quotation is a refreshing revelation. Coming from a "Marseillais" (most of whom are usually compared to Texans because of their natural tendency to brag) it could be called the epitome of modesty. It also proves that the truly great artist is usually his own severest critic, who can afford to spurn any honor which he feels he doesn't deserve.

Court's commendable example must have set a precedent for the barrist fraternity, because such eminent artists as the Luppus, Egelmans, Poppescus, Ataydes, Ibarra, etc., have always refrained from claiming to have done the triple — even though it has been ascertained that, at one time or other, they, like Court, had succeeded in executing it in practice but never in public.

Nevertheless, one performer did it — publicly though *NOT* regularly at every performance. When Newell & Shevette appeared at the Paris Folies Bergere in 1896; and also before that when presenting their "bar and casting" act known as "THE ORLOS", PHILIP SHEVETTE would, when feeling fit, often do the triple "fly-away" from the end bar. However, it must be pointed out that said bar from which Shevette executed the triple was set a foot higher than the conventional height — thereby increasing the space for his trajectory.

It is quite possible that if Court and some of our other famous barrists had duplicated Shevette's bar-height, they, too, might have been able to execute the



This 1925 photo of the Flying Melzers shows, left to right, Ray Melzer, Mrs. Melzer, Mr. Melzer, Jess Deteiller, Harry Krueger, Paul Garee and Buster Melzer. Detweiller and Garee were part of the CASTING WONDERS. Photo from Raymond Melzora.

triple publicly. The fact remains that, for the record, Phillip Shevette is the one and only barrist that can be recorded as having executed the triple from the bars.

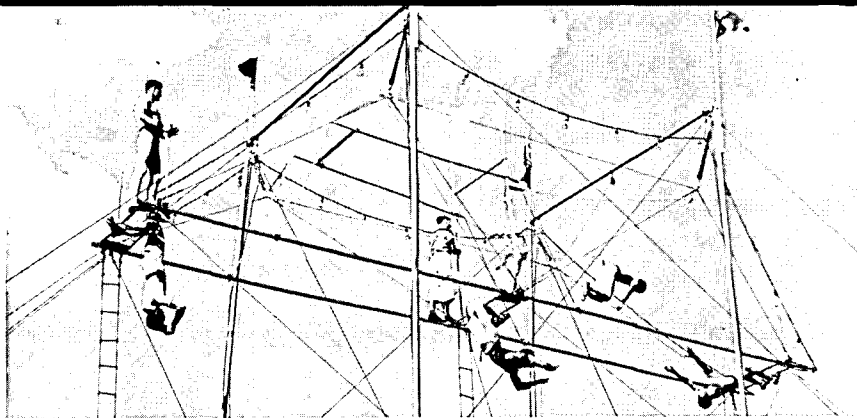
Before concluding this installment on the bars, one has to pause and mention the triple from the "casting cradle" — which cannot be categorized either as a flying trapeze number — or a bar act. And, inasmuch as in one instance the execution of the triple included the use of a horizontal bar and a catch-trap, this particular one doesn't fall into the casting act category, either.

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The Peerless Potter performing at the Chicago World's Fair in 1933. Burt Wilson Collection.

If the records are correct, the first triple ever done from either a fly-bar and/or a horizontal bar, was executed in 1905 by DENNIS STURK, in an act known as Sport Zeno's "FLYING THROUGH SPACE." This was a combination bar and trapeze number, in which Dennis Sturk, an outstanding barrist, did execute various routines on the horizontal bar anchored at the one end of a flying trapeze rigging. Incredible as it may sound today, Dennis Sturk, after executing a series of giant swings on the horizontal bar, would launch himself into a triple—to Zeno, hanging from the trap, catching the triple into a wrist-to-wrist catch!

Also, in that special category named the "casting act", wherein catchers hanging from "cradles" (usually set about 15

feet over a trampoline) send and catch their flyers from one to the other, should be mentioned "THE 4 CASTING WONDERS". During the years 1922-23, the catchers on the two cradles were the GAREE BROTHERS, Paul and Al; their leapers were JESS DETWEILLER and HAROLD BENNETT. For two years, regularly and at every performance, Jess Detweiller executed the triple from the hands of Paul Garee to the hands of his brother, Al—making a wrist-to-wrist catch!

Two years later, during 1924-25, "THE CASTING STARS", consisting of Joe Kuntz and Jim McCall as catchers and Tommy Davis and Tommy Burke as flyers, also duplicated the feat!

Likewise during that same period came "THE CASTING LUCKENS", with the youngest, Roy Luckens, executing the triple between the hands of his older brothers, Harry and Gus!

Whether on the three bars or the casting act, there is no performer executing the triple these days. Perhaps some day there will appear over the circus horizon a "phenomenon" who will duplicate Shevette's feat from the horizontal bar—even without the extra height—and prove to the modern circophile that turning a triple from the three bars is not an impossible feat. But when one considers the present stage of decadence and also the ever-dwindling number of performers dedicating themselves to that particular phase of acrobatics, one can but ruefully conclude: "That'll be the day!"

In the meanwhile, we can only hope for a renaissance of the triple bars—and pay homage to the many fine artists of the past and present who possessed the courage, determination, patience and endurance to master the order of rhythm out of which emerged performances of such perfection that they could conscientiously present them to the consideration of an oft-times unappreciative audience. And even though no barrist may again master the triple, may every circophile cherish the memory of those artists who no longer grace the circus ring with their presence, and may he show his appreciation of those who are still performing by giving them the generous applause they deserve.

(TO BE CONTINUED—In the next issue—The Triple In Risley.)

## AND A HAPPY ST. SWITHIN'S DAY

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Or

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To Ye All

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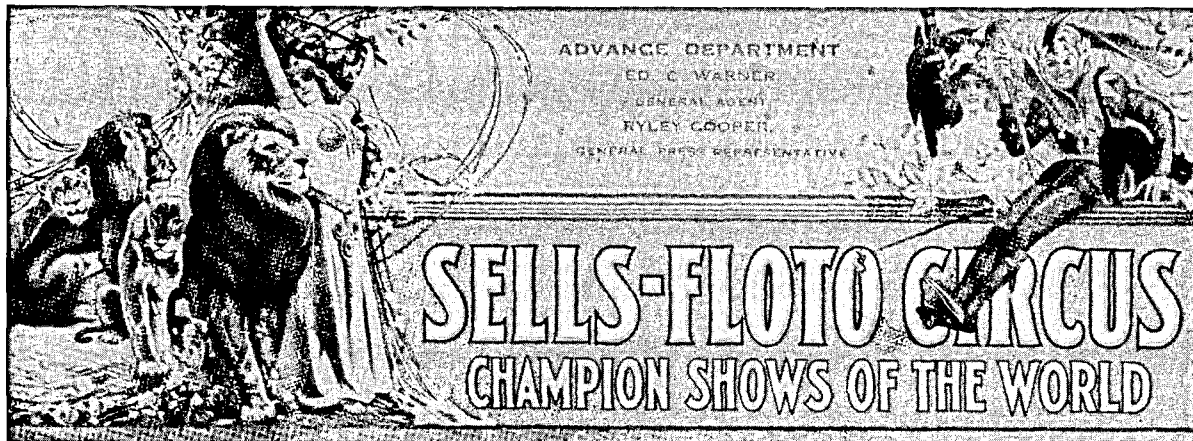
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## Chalmer Condon's Letterheads



NOTICE EXTRAORDINARY: Nowhere in the world is there an equal to Sells Floto's 1916 program, owing to the distinctly unusual amassing of novel and worth-while attractions by this institution, giving reality to the title, "Champion Circus of the World", by the addition of every exhibition champion possible to procure--Jess Willard, champion pugilist of the world; Frank Gotch, champion wrestler of the world; Rosa Rosaland, champion somersault equestrienne of the world; "Jumping Jupiter" champion auto hurdling horse; Ross De Voro, champion cowboy of the world; Rhoda Royal, champion equestrian of the world; Lucia Zora, champion trainer and her thirty tons of world champion elephants; America, champion spectacle, inspired by Ottokar Bartik, champion spectacle producer of the world --and every other worth-while champion who lives. Hereafter, when you think "champion", think Sells-Floto. They are one and the same.

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*Holiday*

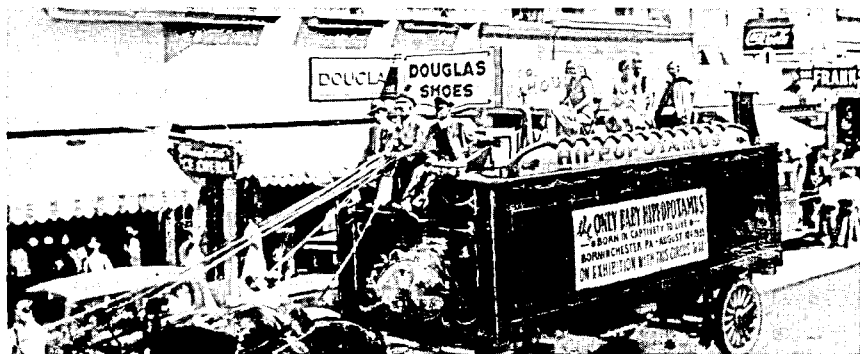
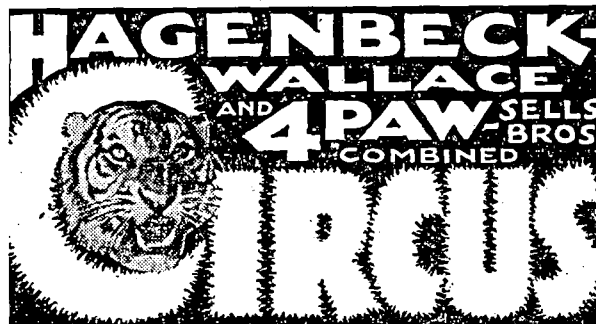
*Greetings*

**Fred B. Pfening, Jr.**





## PHOTO SECTION

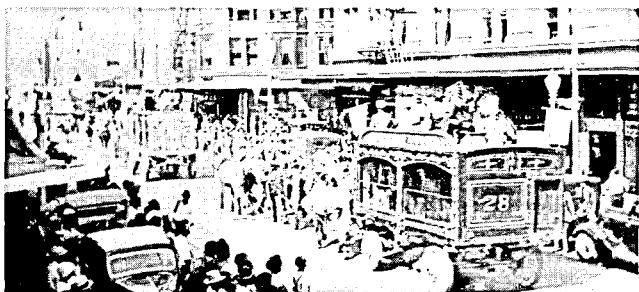


No. 1 — Hagenbeck-Wallace parade, Mon. Oct. 14, 1935 with No. 14 former John Robinson hippo den bearing sign stating cage contains "Only Baby Hippopotamus Born in Captivity to Live", born at Chester, Pa. Aug. 10, 1935. This hippo named Chester was later on Ringling-Barnum in the 1940's. All photos taken by Tom and Pasco Scaperlanda.

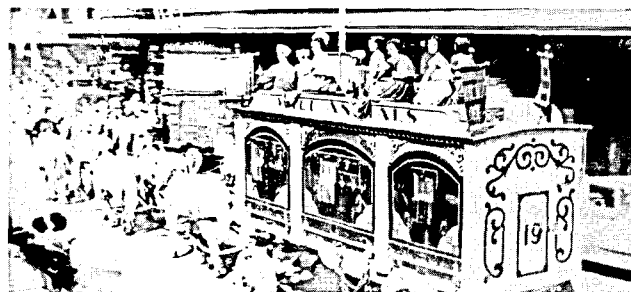
The following photos were furnished by Member Tom Scaperlanda and picture the street parade presented by Hagenbeck-Wallace 4 Paw Sells Combined Circus in 1935. They were taken by Tom and his brother, Pasco, at the show's Oct. 14, 1935 stand at San Antonio, Texas. Although photos taken of the show that season are plentiful these are considered quite rare and are the only ones actually showing the parade that have been seen by the Bandwagon staff. Member Scaperlanda has generously furnished these for presentation in this publication. Although the giant street parade that was featured in 1934 was not continued for 1935 several parades were

given at selected stands and San Antonio was one of them. Many changes took place on the show between the 1934 and 1935 seasons. Manager Jess Adkins and featured wild animal trainer, Clyde Beatty, resigned following the 1934 season to become associated with the new Cole Bros. Circus being framed to make it's initial tour in 1935. Ralph J. Clawson was named by the Ringling ownership to manage the show and Bert Nelson was signed to work the lions and tigers of Beatty's old act. The show was cut down considerably in size although most of the cut was in the menagerie, parade wagons, and baggage stock. Little change in size and quality of the performance took

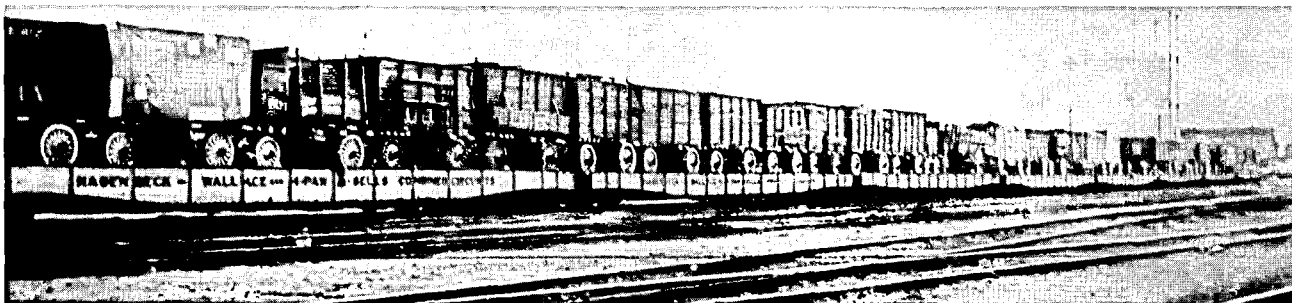
place. In 1934 the show had travelled on 49 cars consisting of 1 advance, 12 stocks, 25 flats, and 11 coaches and in 1935 it went out on 35 cars with 1 advance, 8 stocks, 16 flats, and 10 coaches. Most of the elaborate parade wagons used in 1934 were stored at Peru following the 1934 season but the steam calliope remained as well as the large No. 71 and No. 75 tableaux, the Elephant Tableau, and probably the Carl Hagenbeck Lion Tab. Even though the makeshift parade given at some stands in 1935 was much smaller than the one presented a year earlier still it was an adequate and pleasing march. Also for 1935 the title of Forepaugh-Sells Bros. was tacked on to Hagenbeck-Wallace to keep it from falling into public domain as it had not been in use since 1911. Equipment on the show in 1935 was of the finest quality with some of it having been on both the John Robinson and Sells-Floto circuses when they were on the road.



No. 2 — Cage No. 28.



No. 3 — Cage No. 19.



No. 4 — Section of loaded train in San Antonio rail yards. Note lengthly 1935 title stenciled on the flat cars.

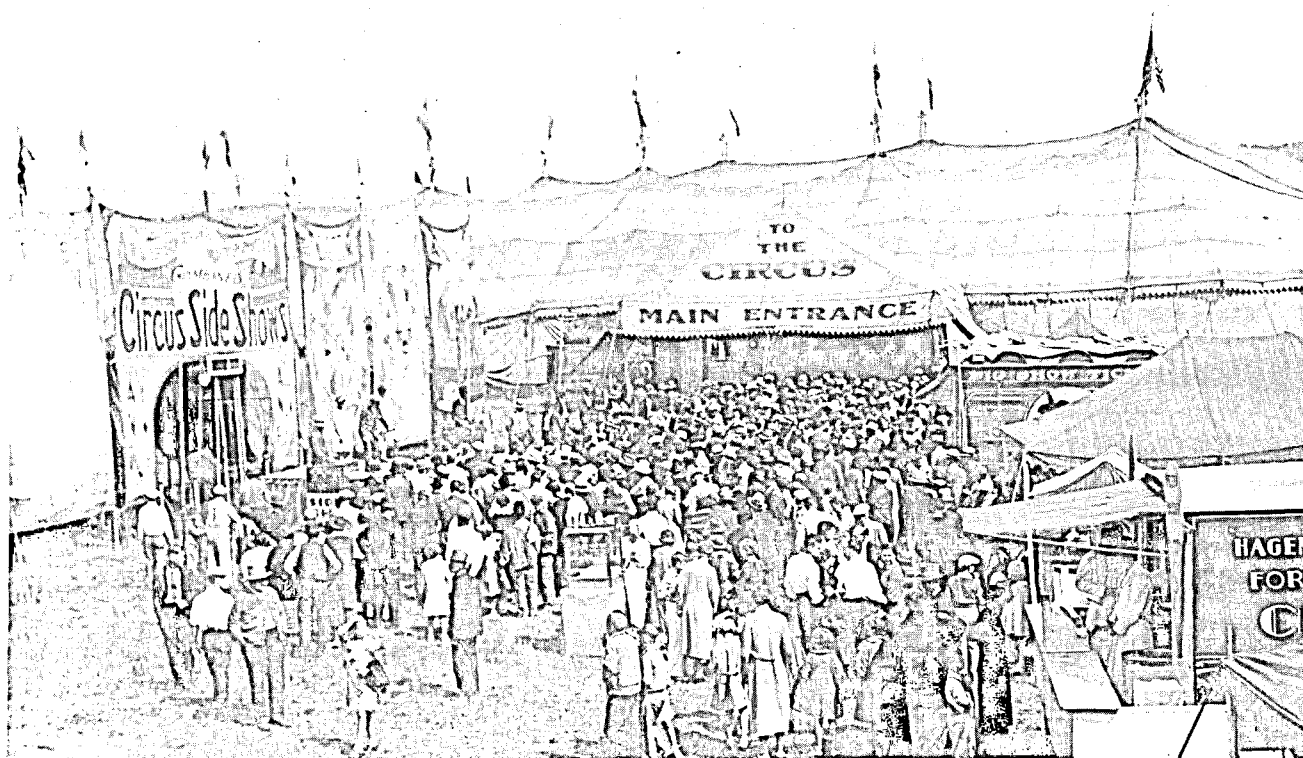


No. 5 — Tableau No. 75 with full side painting of Red Riding Hood on one side, Peter Pumpkin Eater on opposite. Sideshow band up.



No. 6 — Cage No. 25 pulled by 6 horse hitch. This is one of the typical two and three section dens built in the 20's for Hagenbeck-Wallace and Sells-Floto by Bill Curtis.

The additional photos of the 1935 Hagenbeck-Wallace Forepaugh Sells Bros. Circus below are from the Burt Wilson Collection.







## Exciting News from Baraboo

Chappie Fox, Director of the Circus World Museum, recently announced a number of new additions to the circus property at the Baraboo, Wisconsin, show place.

Late in August two Ringling-Barnum ticket wagons arrived from the Continental Circus at the New York World's Fair. The large red ticket wagon was built in the 1920s and is 18 feet long. The smaller round corner wagon was made by the Springfield Wagon & Trailer Co., for the show in 1936. This wagon is 16 feet long. The Springfield wagon will remain painted with the stripes as used last on the show in 1957, and will be used as a ticket wagon at the entrance to museum. The heavy wagon will be painted as it was 30 years ago.

In September the museum purchased three wagons from Robert Senhauser, of New Philadelphia, Ohio. These wagons were all on the various Floyd and Howard King railroad circuses of the 1920s. They were last on the 1930 Cole

The oval design wagon as it appeared on the Cole show in 1929. The "CB" is shown on the mud board. This wagon now has a diamond shaped mirror inside the oval. Pfening Collection.



Bros. 10 car circus. This show was stored in Illinois following the closing in 1930, and the complete show was purchased by George Christy some years later. In 1950 these three wagons were used at the Railroad Fair in Chicago. Senhauser purchased them from the fair. The Sea Serpent tab was built for the Sparks show by Sullivan & Eagle in Peru. The Diamond Tab with painting was built in Baraboo for the Gollmar Bros. The full history of the wagon with the oval design is not known. It now has a diamond mirror inside the oval.

A month or so later another tab wagon was received from the West Coast. This is the three diamond mirror wagon that was on Golden Bros., Lee Bros. and last on the Ken Maynard Wild West in 1936. This wagon was not purchased by Walt Disney and remained at the Bradley & Kaye amusement park in Hollywood.

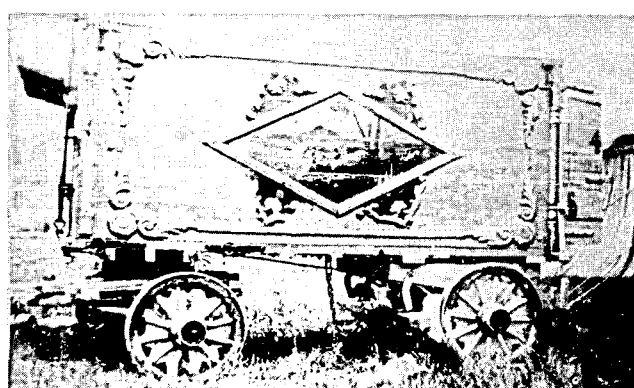
In October the museum took ownership of the old Ringling Bros. World's Greatest Shows railroad shops in Baraboo. This included 13 acres and 12 buildings. This much needed storage area will allow all of the parade wagons to be kept inside during the winter months. The wagons will be stored in a building 80 by 125 feet. The car shops were given to the

This rare photo shows the Ringling car shops in 1915. A sleeper is shown at the right and elephant cars are barely visible at the far left. The buildings are west of the Baraboo river. This photo from Bill Kasiska now in the Pfening Collection.

Circus World Museum by the North American Car Corporation.

The most thrilling news of all is the announcement of the acquisition of 12 circus flat cars and one circus stock car that had been used by the defunct World of Mirth carnival. These flats include those made by the Mt. Vernon Co. and the Warren Tank Car Co. They will be redecked and placed in generally first class condition and will be used to move the 40 odd parade wagons from Baraboo to Milwaukee for the 1965 July 4th parade. The flat cars will be painted different colors and lettered in authentic style with titles honoring the famous railroad circuses of the past. Eight of the cars will have the same title on each side and four will have a different title on each side, so that a greater number of titles can be represented. In this way a total of sixteen different titles will be shown. The stock car will carry the six

The diamond painting tab is shown here as it appeared on the Cole show in 1929. The carvings are now rearranged and some of the original carvings are missing. Pfening Collection.





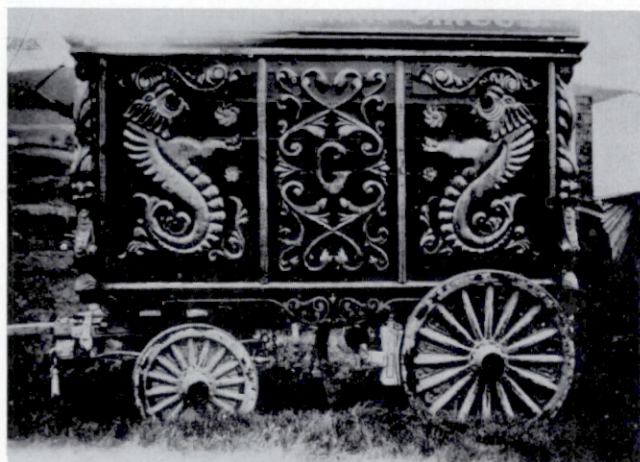
baggage horses now owned by the museum, and will be lettered Circus World Museum. A fourteenth car will be included in the train making the trip to Milwaukee, this will be a coach to carry museum officials and civic leaders who will be guests on the trip. The museum owns a couple of system coaches and one of these may be used. It is not known at this time if one of these will be painted and lettered.

The dapple grey Percherons will be used to load and unload the wagons and the entire movement will be handled as the big circuses did it 40 to 100 years ago.

The Joseph Schlitz Brewing Company approved a special budget to enable the museum to acquire the former carnival rail cars. Members of the Circus Historical Society are aiding Mr. Fox by providing photos and historical information that will allow all of this equipment to be restored and painted just as it was when actually used by the original circuses.

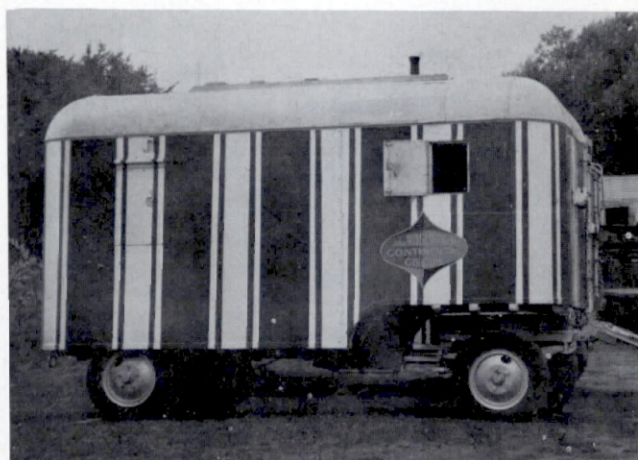


The Ringling Barnum red ticket wagon is with gold scroll work and the title was in shown in this 1939 photo. It was decorated old english lettering. Photo by Pfening.

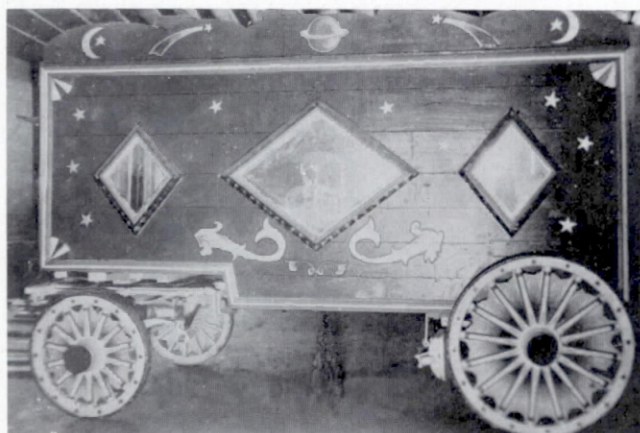


The original Sparks Sea Serpent wagon with the Walter L. Main Circus around 1928. The "G" in the center stood for Gentry Bros., the

titled used on the wagon the year before. Pfening Collection.



The Springfield style ticket wagon with the Continental Circus title after it arrived at the museum. Circus World Museum Photo.



The Lee Bros, three diamond mirror wagon is shown here as it was painted while on the Ken Maynard Wild West show in 1936. The wagon was repainted by used in motion

pictures and has been standing out doors in recent years. Pfening Collection.



This 1944 photograph shows a group of the World of Mirth carnival flats loaded with typical hard rubber tired carnie wagons. Burt Wilson Collection.



# Review of the 1964 Season

By TOM PARKINSON

This was a season when the shortage of able advance people and the increased difficulties of booking auspices shows were more apparent than ever. It was a season that saw something in the neighborhood of 50 circuses on the road, but the big ones were few. A surprising portion of the tented roster was filled by shows that moved on eleven or eight or five or three trucks.

For business, most 1964 circuses indicated they found spotty returns. There were occasional big flares of business for some outfits. Others hit the winners just often enough to last out the bad ones. Although some circuses didn't make the full season, there was no widespread depression in the field—only the usual cases of shorts and very little of the sort of folding that can be so painful and tragic. But on the other hand, there were an awful lot of October closings and nearly no attempts to run late into November or December. This would indicate that while circuses had enough money to afford closing for the winter, prospects weren't so good that they would try to stretch the time limits on the touring weather.

Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey expanded to 19 cars, promised 20 for next season and began looking for equipment to convert if it needed more. It opened its 94th season at Miami Beach January 21 and reported a 20 percent increase in pre-New York stands. It had an advance sale of a reported \$280,000 for the 48 days in Madison Square Garden prior to its March 24 opening.

With Rudy Bundy and Toughy Gen-

ders in full command and with Henry Ringling North back on the show for the season, there were several early changes. One was the resignation of James C. Ringling as agent on February 28. The Feld organization of Washington, D.C., took over much of the routing and booking, as well as promotion it had done for some time.

While RB was getting underway in this country, its European edition cancelled the final three towns, closed at Stuttgart, Germany, and parked its wagons and equipment at the Althoff quarters in Frankfurt. John Ringling North remained in Europe and toured the Balkans for the first time in years, thanks to Communist government changes in policy toward the matter.

Ringling completed its Garden stay May 10. It played Boston two weekends, with New Haven scheduled for the intervening week days and later in the season did the same in California, with Oakland being played for weekdays between two weekends it spent in San Francisco. Ringling played Chicago in late June and then Milwaukee until the July 4 show and parade. In Dallas in mid-July it scored record business.

Then RB made a single jump from Dallas (July 15-19) to Los Angeles. Starting July 22, the Los Angeles stand reportedly netted \$500,000. That 1,500-mile jump was followed shortly by a similar hop from San Francisco (July 28-30) to Denver (Aug. 2-7). At Des Moines the show was day and date with the Beatty outfit. St. Louis business was not good, and the season as a whole was

both up and down. This show took over the Kansas City Shrine date, cancelling Cleveland to play it. Late season routing was changed repeatedly. The show closed at the new building in Mobile, Ala., November 29, and returned to Venice, Fla., quarters with rumors it would open in its own building there next year. There also were reports of elaborate plans for a bigger performance next season.

Ringling played day and date against itself in New York for a while, since its Garden date overlapped the opening of its show at the New York World's Fair. The one-ring European layout at the fair had poor business from the first, as did all of the other amusement operations at the fair. This show opened May 8, 17th day of the fair. It had abandoned original plans for \$2 and \$3 tickets even before opening. But even \$1 tickets didn't sell, so the price and the show were cut in June; tickets were 50 cents. The show's gorilla pit show, with Toto at 25 cents, outgrossed the big show, where business always was bad. There was no announcement about Ringling's plans for the 1964 Fair season or for other possible uses of the same equipment.

Biggest among the canvas shows was Clyde Beatty & Cole Bros. Circus, moving on 36 show-owned trucks and working under a 150 with three 50s. The nut was probably something around five-gees and the program included some of the greatest names in circus business—Beatty, Wallenda, Cristiani—although Clyde Beatty was ill, it was a new generation of Wallendas and Lucio Cristiani worked under another name.

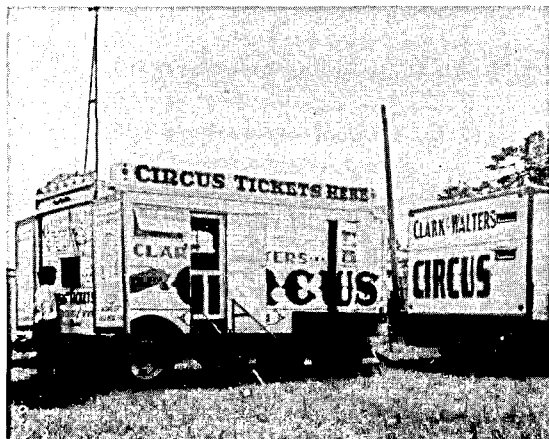
The famed trainer whose name is on the wagons left at mid-season to enter a Chicago hospital for surgery July 28. He recuperated in Illinois and California before returning to Florida, where he joined the show at Tampa as the season neared the end. He did not work then but expected to be back in shape for next season. Joe (Red) Hartman worked the Beatty act during the name trainer's absence and did a fine job with the lions.

The Beatty-Cole route was notable for odd jumps at the first and last. From Deland, Fla., quarters the convoy moved to Long Island Arena at Commack, N.Y., an annual starting place, for March 26-April 5. But then it jumped far back south to Salisbury, N.C., for opening under canvas April 8. And at the tail end of the season, New Orleans was set first for three days, October 2-4, only to be cancelled by hurricane weather. So the route was run out to Orlando, Fla., Nov. 2 and the substitute New Orleans date was appended. This meant a jump of 650 miles backwards.

But at New Orleans this time the show found good business. The lot was 15 feet



Owner Bill Griffith making an opening on the side show of Birnam Bros. Circus. Photo from Amusement Business Magazine.



The Clark and Walters Circus, 1964, John Vogelsang Photo.

from the New Orleans city limits, in the suburb of Gretna and on a main thoroughfare. What had been a three-day October date now became a four-day November stand. On the Saturday two shows were scheduled and it took three to handle the crowds, and on Sunday two matinees were planned but three were given. Concessions were sold out, which is excellent but less surprising at the finale for the year.

Between the show's unusual pre and post season jumps came a national tour of generally good business. Business was off somewhat by mid-May so there was a reappraisal of ad campaigns. From the opening, the Beatty-Cole show had eliminated outdoor billing in favor of more budget to radio-TV and newspapers. But the results weren't up to par, so a bill crew was formed and paper ordered, with improved results. A new top and a new cookhouse truck were added at the Philadelphia stand.

Very strong business was mixed with weak spots, according to most reports. Minnesota and several Texas stands were off; Iowa and Wisconsin were among the good areas. The CHS convention was with the Beatty show July 5 and CFA met with the show at San Antonio September 18-19. Tommy Clark replaced the late George Weiner as big top boss. Morgan City, La., Oct. 1, was lost to storm and flooded lots.

Beatty-Cole played day and date with Ringling-Barnum at Des Moines July 9. Since Ringling had no matinees, many of the people visited on the Beatty-Cole outfit. The New Orleans stand was played against opposition from the Tom Packs Circus, which was sponsored by the Shrine. Nine years ago, RBBB had gotten an injunction against the Shrine show in order to play the town and no other tented show had played New Orleans until now. Packs ran large opposition ads on behalf of its Nov. 21-29 stand at the Municipal Auditorium this year.

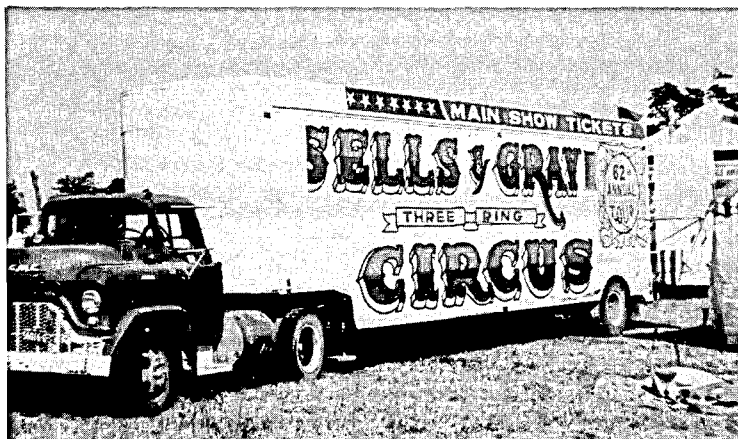
There was a 40x80 cookhouse top. The

menagerie-side show was a push-pole with two 30s, and it contained 11 bulls plus six cages with a tiger, jaguar, chimp, black bear, puma and three tiger cubs, one of which died September 13 at Killeen, Texas. In the big top were an 18-foot track, one 42-foot ring for the arena and riders, and two 36-foot rings. Reserves were ten high and 23 lengths long, while blues were 12 high. Both had provisions for adding jokes, or toe stringers.

Al G. Kelly & Miller Bros. Circus wintered at Ocean Springs, Miss., instead of Hugo, Okla., and operated all winter as an elephant ranch for tourist trade. This zoo-and-rides center continued all year. Meanwhile, the circus opened March 30 at Pascagoula, Miss., and took the unusual springtime road eastward to Georgia and Florida. Joe McMahon was manager-agent until D. R. Miller returned after resolving his tax problems for the time being. Then McMahon returned to manage the elephant ranch. By late season he was considering an agent's post with a proposed Cristiani show of 1965.

Kelly-Miller has suffered several blows in recent seasons, took some more this time, and it was all reflected in the make-up of the circus. The hippo (Miss Oklahoma), the rhino, the Cuneo leopard act and at least three elephants were sold to three Mexican circuses. The giraffe died when its head became caught in the truck. The African elephant died. Two pony drills were sent home for lack of a trainer. And at least one elephant was sent to the Mississippi ranch. As the season ended, Miller bought two of the Woodcock elephants and sold two more of his own herd to Mexican shows. This left Miller owning nine.

Kelly-Miller moved on 18 trucks, with four more ahead. There were eight elephants and a five-lion act, both worked by Fred Logan. In the menagerie cages (6) were polar bear, tiger and lioness, two bears, leopard and puma, and the five lions, the latter taking two cages. The program included the Riding Loyals Pas de Deux and Carrying Act, with two



The Sells & Gray Circus, 1964, Fred Pfening Photo.

rosinbacks, a liberty act and a wild west concert that used three of the liberty horses.

K-M again used its unique entrance wagon. There also were only two seat wagons in use by late season; another one had been damaged. The top was an 80 with three 40s. Squeeze box was mild. The band had two trumpets, a drum and organ.

D. R. Miller was increasingly impatient with phones and promotion this year, but they could not be eliminated. Phones were in use at a town or so a week but reluctantly, because of the small percentage which finds its way to the show. (Of a 75-cent UPC ticket, a circus gets 28 cents.) Billing was hefty. The show seated about 2,000 persons and the nut was something in the area of two gees.

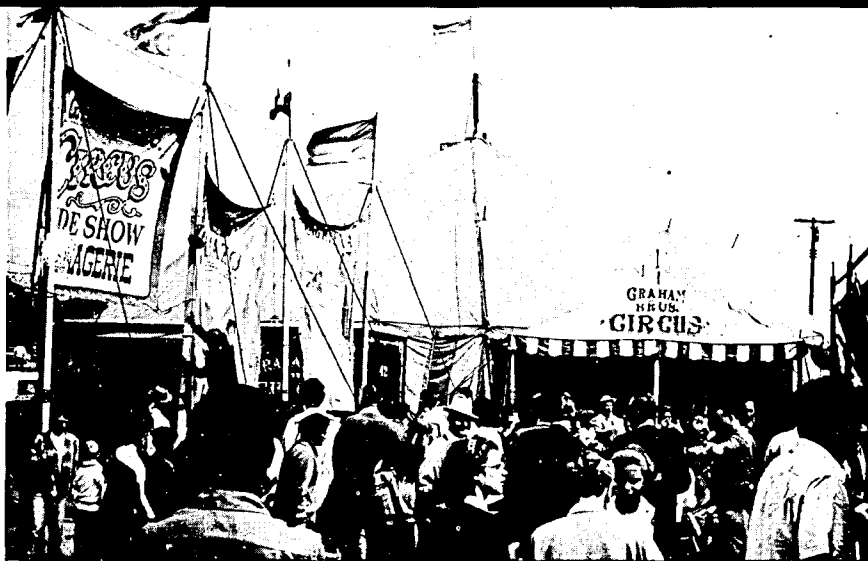
The show played New England, including Vermont, New Hampshire and Massachusetts territory. Moving west, it found business bad in Wisconsin. Illinois was better, and the outfit closed at Chickasha, Okla., October 7. Miller returned to Hugo, but the show went back to Ocean Springs.

Mills Bros. Circus came out of Jefferson, O., fairgrounds quarters April 18 with the usual opening festivities and banquet. This was shortly after bulls and other features had been used in the Cincinnati Shrine show. For its 25th anniversary tour, the Mills show sported a new 120-foot U.S. top with three 40s. There also was a new ticket wagon, but otherwise the rolling stock roster was unchanged.

The Mills performance, still using more band than most and including menage among other traditional features, was lighter by the absence of the Zerbini lion act of recent years.

Business was generally regarded as spotty. Auspices and phones or sell-outs were used everywhere on the 5,815-mile route, which took the Mills aggregation as far west as Chicago suburbs. It closed October 3 at Courtland, Ohio, and re-





Graham Bros. Circus midway during an April California stand. Photo by Doug Lyon.

turned to Jefferson. Of the brothers, Jake was planning to make the annual European scouting tour usually made by Jack.

There were season-long rumors about the Mills brothers' future plans. One suggested the show might cut off a number of trucks next season, but there appeared to be no confirmation. Feelers were put out to Art Concello regarding a possible sale of the show to him, but he seemed to have other plans, and the Mills Bros. Circus was set to go again in 1965.

Barnes & Bailey was the new 1964 title for what had been Carson & Barnes. Jack Moore remained at the helm as manager of this 18-truck circus which wintered at Hope, Ark. This was an ambitious season for the show, using spec carts and other trimmings. It even tried a helicopter for circus bally and for barnstorming passengers. It too had a wild west concert, and there was a hippo pit show to feature. Dick Shipley had the five bulls. Equipment included a 100 with three 60s.

Agent Floyd Hill, with Art Miller as special agent, took it out of Hope quarters to open there April 23. In May it was playing much of Iowa, after which it went to Minnesota. Barnes & Bailey then laid off a week, an unusual turn of events for a circus, while it worked up a route in Canada. Hot weather slowed the business in the Winnipeg area during July. Barnes & Bailey was in the area

early enough that there was no Canadian opposition with King Bros. September found the show in Wyoming; then came spotty to weak business in West Texas before the season ended.

King Bros. Circus, with Bob Snowden as co-owner and manager, wintered at El Centro, Calif., and opened Friday the 13th of March at Chula Vista, Calif., under a new cable top. The spring business was terrific for the 12-truck operation (which this time had added number 18 panel truck for properties).

Three-show days were the rule rather than exception for the California route. King Bros. worked northward to be in Oregon in May and to cross into Canada to play a Vancouver suburb June 1-4, launching its big western Canada tour.

Business dropped then from its high point. The show left the Coast with a fantastic margin of money ahead of last year. But it cost more to run it this time and business even off in Canada and the mid-west. In this, King Bros. was experiencing the old Al G. Barnes pattern of making big money on the Coast and seeing it melt away in the interior. So, while King Bros. had a good season and will go again, it got home to Florida with less than it had left over last season.

Like King Bros., the Sells & Gray Circus is in the family tree of the Beatty-Cole show, and the old master agent, Floyd King, has a hand in routing them all. Sells & Gray opened out of Oneco,

Fla., quarters to play Bradenton, March 14-15. Manager Bill English had it under a new top by Leaf. It was a 90 with a 40 and two 30s, and covered some 1,600 seats.

Sells & Gray moved on nine trucks and carried two elephants. It headed north for the Maritime Provinces of Canada, but intermediate stands were not so good. Not until it reached Pennsylvania and New Jersey did things brighten. The East then was fairly good. The show trucked into the territory of Canada that D. R. Miller's show had tried to play last season when it had so much boat trouble. But the Sells & Gray opera made different towns in the same Maritimes and came out a winner.

It followed with Quebec and much Ontario business that was good, came back to the States for restricted takes and found late business poor in Florida. It had returned to the U.S. August 29 at Oregon, O., and it closed at Gainesville, Ga., October 6.

While some territory was off or spotty, Sells & Gray got back to Sarasota, where it will winter, with the best season's results of its still-young life.

Von Bros. Circus made the second season of its current activities, having trouped also several seasons back. The Vonderheid family put it into the territory abandoned by the inactive Hunt Bros. Circus, and it also sported some ex-Hunt equipment. Elephants Dolly and Blanche were rented from Mrs. Bill Morris, who used to have Kelly-Morris. Von Bros. opened April 25 at Dover, Del. It moved on about 15 trucks and had a 90 with three 40s.

Famous Cole Circus went out under the sole management of Robert Couls, following the completion of his purchase of the show from Herb Walters. From Hugo quarters it went to Bonham, Texas, to start things rolling April 2. Gene Christian again was its agent. The show moved on 11 trucks and performed under a 70 with three 30s.

Its route through the Middle West resulted in spotty business, but the year was counted as successful. In September it lost a day because of health authorities' actions after a case of sleeping sickness had been discovered somewhere else in county involved. Like many shows, this one was subject of rumors about future plans. There was talk of converting to a shopping center show and separate reports that it would instead open a second unit to play fair dates. The season ended October 15 at Chandler, Ark., with talk of a Christmas unit in the air.

Clark & Walters was a new show fielded by Herb Walters, who apparently



The Famous Cole Circus, 1964, John Vogel-sang Photo.

couldn't stay away after selling his piece of Famous Cole. Clark & Walters was all new except for the side show, which came out of Kelly-Miller barns in Hugo.

This outfit moved on eight show-owned trucks and utilized a 70 with one 30 and two 20s. Again Walters used a rep show entrance, an inset canvas arrangement under the main top rather than a circus-style marquee. It opened April 12 at Boswell, Okla., and closed in October. Then it returned to Hugo quarters to consider whether the future might involve a new angel or what other changes were in store.

Clark & Walters followed the lead of Birnam Bros. in scheduling shows at 6 and 8 p.m. in spring and fall weeks when schools are in session. This seemed to mean more business at 6 p.m. than at the 4 p.m. matinees tried sometimes in the past.

Birnam Bros. was the 1964 activity of Bill Griffith. After splitting away from Little Bob Stevens, Griffith framed this five trucker with a 70 and three 30s from O. Henry. It opened February 29 in South Texas. Business was reported to be good for the entire season, with a couple of Iowa weeks being off. This show specialized in advance work, including bills, postal heralds and newspaper ads of strength.

It moved northward from The Valley of Texas to Missouri and Wisconsin. September 30 was lost because a train hit the pole truck en route to Malden, Mo. After Arkansas cotton country in early October, Birnam Bros. went into Texas and closed at Seguin, October 18. It returned to San Antonio winter quarters.

Meanwhile, Little Bob Stevens took out Sells Bros. Circus, with his share of the 1963 Stevens-Griffith partnership



The Mills Bros. Circus, 1964, John Vogelsang Photo.



show plus some 1961 Hagen Bros. stuff. Once he planned to call his new show Gentry & Sells, but only the Sells part came out in type and paint. It had ten trucks and a 100 with two 40s, opening February 8 in South Texas. Bad weather dogged the show. When a storm hit the Wichita Falls area, Sells Bros. peaked its top and cleared the audience ahead of the wind. The storm flattened things and the show lost two days.

Late in March, Little Bob drove Sells Bros. into Hugo and closed it. But he immediately joined Sterling & Wallace. This was a 14-truck outfit framed by Johnny Frazier. It moved for the Middle West and reached Bass Lake, Indiana, before folding. The equipment was parked after a 13-week tour, ending July 26. Then Frazier went to Clark & Walters while Stevens transferred to Famous Cole, taking his elephants along.

Charles Koehler, of Houston, reopened his Dianiana Circus this spring, after making part of the 1963 time. It moved on three trucks and four trailers and had a 60 with two 30s, utilizing 15 sections of six-high seats. It also owned a baby elephant bought from the Six Flags Over Texas park at Dallas, from where Glen Henry bought another.

Dixiana, trying to duplicate the original Gentry appeal, was a pretty and well-framed little show. It opened April 2 at West Columbia, Texas, sustained a blowdown in a tornado at Houston and came on up to Illinois and Indiana. It caught up with its advance once and had to lay off while they booked some more towns. It was only a week or so behind its contracting thereafter, and about mid-season it closed again.

Another "picture" circus was Fairyland, the little outfit that Obert Miller framed for fun — his fun. It opened April 18 at Hugo, Okla., quarters. He had five trucks, a 60x120 one-piece top, and one elephant. It played Missouri in June and Iowa in July. In late July it closed and returned to Hugo.

The cause was lack of route and lack of agent. When Tom McLaughlin was available, there was no trouble. But he became ill, and no one else seemed able to set it down. Miller took it home and

New letterhead and route card design for the 1964 Barnes & Bailey Circus, operated by Jack Moore.

indicated he wouldn't take it out again in 1965. But this was in contrast to a late 1964 statement. When it appeared McLaughlin could be back, Miller began to count on trouping Fairyland Circus again.

Neil Berk, former agent for several shows, and Ray Beaudet, booking agent, combined to take out International Hippodrome Circus. It opened March 26-28 at Asheville, N.C., in a blizzard and then played both indoor and outdoor dates, both open air and canvas stands, with such personnel as the Benny branch of Christianis on hand. International Hippodrome had seven trucks and a 90 with one 50, new this year from Norfolk Tent & Awning. It used one ring, three sections of eight-high chair reserves, and four sections of eight-high blues. There were two elephants, a horse and a pony.

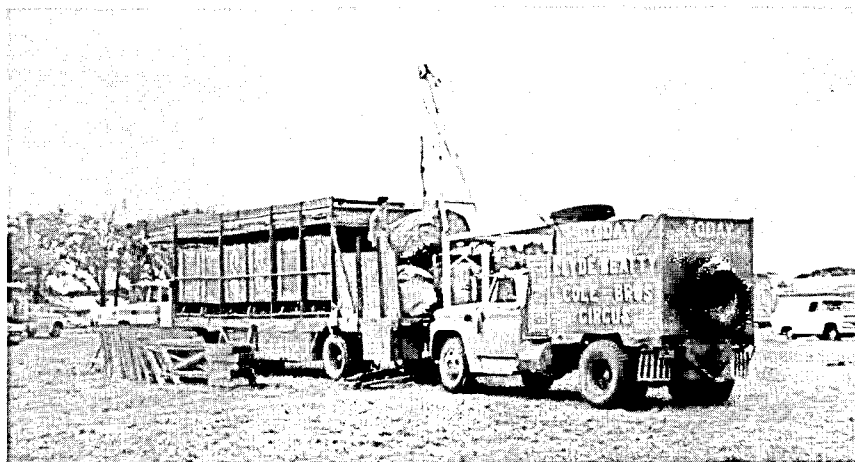
It went to Canada in May and came back to a two-week layoff in July. The show reopened in Virginia to good business, played to weak Tennessee takes, and spotty business otherwise. It was headed for Mississippi, Louisiana and maybe Texas.

Gene Cody & Kipling Bros. was an enterprise of Bill Garden, formerly of Garden Bros. Circus in Canada. It opened out of Sarasota May 14 with seven trucks and an 80x140 top. It worked its way north to Canada, played there and then came back to Florida.

Hoxie Bros. Circus had a spotty season, too. Pennsylvania was all right. The CMBOA met there at Greensburg, Pa. The cookhouse burned in Tennessee early in the season. A bull leased from Mrs. Bill Morris died, and two bulls owned by Franco Richards were pulled out to join the Drew carnival. Hoxie Tucker was the owner-manager, and he planned to troupe it again in 1965.

Out in California Pat Graham tried it again. He had Wallace & Clark before and called it Graham Bros. this time out. It opened in rain at Glendora on March 31, using a 90x170 top. May found it up in Washington, where it





The International Hippodrome Circus side walled at a Long Island stand in June. Photo from Amusement Business Magazine.

The Clyde Beatty Cole Bros. Circus, 1964, Fred Pfening Photo.



had opposition with James Bros., May 25 at Spokane and May 26 at Yakima.

On July 4 the Graham Bros. office wagon first broke a trailer hitch and then caught fire, burning to the ground. It was largely because of this that the show closed then. It planned to reopen

September 6 but failed to do so and gave its late date to DeWayne Bros. Circus. It experienced routing and booking troubles, spotty business and layoff, as did some of the others.

Some of the other shows included:

Beers-Barnes, which also had booking troubles, to the point that some of the owning family members were out contracting at one point.

Hagan-Wallace Circus & Carnival, which like many shopping center shows this season, played to light business.

James Bros. Circus, out of Martinez, Calif., April 17 and making its first trip to Southern California.

Bailey Bros. Circorama, starting April 25 at McAlister, Okla., and playing a string of dates formerly held by the late Big Bob Stevens with a similar Bailey title. This one was operated by his son-in-law, John Guteirrez, and Gus Bell.

Ken Jenson Circus.

Dailey Bros., another shopping center combination, with Pete Cristiani, a number of circus acts and a set of 15 rides. Dolly Young was there as ride manager. Cristiani's animals, including a hippo, remained at Busch Gardens zoo in Tampa.

Paul A. Miller Shopping Center show. Animaland USA, also at shopping centers.

Big John Strong, in California school dates and others.

Ben Davenport had another shopping center circus-carnival. Its season was highlighted by legal action taken by Arumagi Singh to seize the baby elephant. Singh claimed his family had been stranded in Venezuela more than three years and that he had substantial back wages coming. Davenport reclaimed the elephant, and final disposition has not come to light.

Indoor circuses of the season included: Polack Bros., playing its usual route of Shrine and similar dates. Several were added at military bases this time. It re-

peated its July 4 stand at the Pasadena Rose Bowl.

Hamid-Morton, opening at Milwaukee for the Jaycees and adding Dallas and others to the list of old standby stands.

Clyde Bros., which imported six baby bulls in March, backed off of a plan to play Chicago in conjunction with Tom Parker when their dates proved to be in direct opposition to Ringling's. R-B used wait ads in December, against phone rooms that would affect Polack's February and Clyde's July dates in competition with RB's July Chicago stand. Clyde owners, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Suesz went to Europe on a talent-seeking junket.

Tom Parks Circus played regulars like Nashville, St. Louis, Pittsburgh and New Orleans. Karl Wallenda was equestrian director. Jack Leontini was manager and took full charge after the death of owner Tom Packs.

Rudy Bros., which had its biggest, strongest show, played all the territory west of the Mississippi River. Rudy Jacobi went to Europe and met his in-laws, owners of an Althoff circus in Germany, which made use of the family link and called their show "Rudy Bros. USA" part of the time.

Al Dobritch, who won contracts for big dates like Los Angeles, Detroit, St. Louis, and more, several of them ex Orrin Davenport towns. Dobritch held and played both Minneapolis and St. Paul Shrine dates.

M and M Circus, operated by Grace McIntosh and Charles Marine, and playing more of the old Davenport route.

Gil Gray Circus, making the territory between Dallas and Saskatchewan again. He leased spec wardrobe and equipment for the Texas Shrine show route.

Frank Wirth, playing Long Island and Connecticut dates.

Patterson Bros. in Michigan.

William Kay, largely in Wisconsin.

Harold Bros., operated by Harold Voise, at Lansing, Mich.

All-American Indoor Circus, of Byron Gosh.

Hubert Castle, with more Orrin Davenport inheritances. He also played the Indianapolis Shrine show where Holiday on Ice had suffered an explosion last year. No performer could use explosives or slapsticks of any kind; no act could be called "death-defying."

More shows were the E. K. Fernandez effort in Honolulu, the Florida State University Circus tour of Europe for CBS, which filmed the jaunt for future TV use; and the circus-like show called Tommy Scott & Col. Tim McCoy.

John Harris, who recently sold Ice Capades, announced plans for a new indoor circus, but found it impossible to get participation by the necessary number of the arena managers who were his former partners in the ice show. He had hoped to frame a show similar to

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the Russian circus and, for example, had his eye on a single-elephant act. There were no plans to buy bulls, major transport or other circus gear but rather to book it and add wardrobe or similar supplies. One typical stumbling block was the need for a spring route among major Eastern buildings but the inability to get Madison Square Garden time in view of the Ringling-Barnum annual stay there. By fall, he announced the plans were dropped.

Of significance among overseas circuses were the moves of British circuses. First the important Chipperfield Circus announced it was moving from England to South Africa, a switch the Wilkie show made several years ago. Chipperfield plans to show in Africa hereafter, but maintain an office in England. Second, the major Bertram Mills Circus revealed that, like Ringling, it no longer will play under canvas. It had suffered losses two years in a row and now will limit itself to indoor dates like its big London winter stand.

Americans were getting as much circus action out of the Circus World Museum as any place in the business. The museum grossed more than ever and nearly equalled attendance of its record 1959 season. It continued with daily circus performances, train loading and unloading as well as other features. The big Milwaukee parade was national circus news. And at the end of the season, the

Route		Season
Card		1964
No. 4		
Per. Add. Circusland, Penn Yan, N. Y.		
Date	Town	Miles
SEVENTH WEEK		
Mar. 16	Chenango Forks, N. Y.	60
Mar. 17	Vestal, N. Y.	20
Mar. 18	Deposit, N. Y.	40
Mar. 19	Harpursville, N. Y.	25
Mar. 20	Newfield, N. Y.	80
Mar. 21	Trumansburg, N. Y.	25
Season Ends		Total 255
We sincerely thank all the performers and personnel for job well done in keeping up the entertainment quality of the Cole Circus. Hope you all will return for our 1965 tour. So long for now. Dorothy and Jimmie Cole		

Route card design of the James M. Cole indoor circus. From the late Henry Varner.

museum revealed it will operate its own circus train next season as it moves equipment to and from the Milwaukee parade.

Significant deaths of the year included these:

Tom Packs, show owner; George Werner, Beatty big top boss; Charlie Bell, veteran clown; Ernst Engerer, trainer killed by one of his lions; Bert Wallace, veteran horse trainer; Mable Mack, once owner of her own show; Bryan Woods, former owner; Jon Shafer, former Mills agent; Frank Whitbeck, veteran circus and MGM man; Bob Dickman, billposter who once had his own show; Carlos Carreon, veteran horse trainer with Sparks and others, doing Wild West concerts with most shows, recently with Mills Bros.; Nat Green, formerly of The Billboard and Ringling-Barnum; Rube Ray, clown who died in the same trailer where his daughter and her husband were asphyxiated a few weeks earlier; Red Rumbell, pie car veteran; Harry Allen, once manager of Hagen Bros.; Dollie Castle, former lion trainer; Elmer Kaufman, bill car manager; Fred Conley, of the Riding Conleys; Clyde Carlton, of the old Ringling advance; Pietro Vristiani, head of the "little Cristiani branch of the family and uncle of Lucio Cristiani, and Charles Underwood, contracting or press agent for Beatty and many more.

Thanks for help from Doug Lyons, Ned Aitchison, Leland Antes, Gordon Carver, Joe Bradbury and a score of show owners and other troupers for assistance and news items.

# CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

from

Marijo and Bob Couls

THE FAMOUS COLE  
CIRCUS



# Milt Hinkle Cowboy and Showman

By HOMER C. WALTON

Milton David Hinkle was born in a dugout on a three million acre ranch near Bobine, Texas, on October 15, 1881. He has led a life of adventure ever since. He has been mainly a cowboy but has worked in other sidelines such as Texas Border Ranger, boxer, circus trouper, etc. He boxed under the ring name of Joe Johnson and boxed with some of the best of his time including Jack Johnson and Jack Dempsey. These two became heavy weight champions of the world. He later boxed exhibition bouts with another heavyweight champion, Max Baer.

Milt's father, George Hinkle, was a cowboy, scout, soldier, bartender, hide and bone buyer, boxer, wrestler, railroad worker, blacksmith and teamster before he became sheriff of Ford County, Kansas. He was elected to that office in November, 1879, beating Bat Masterson. George Hinkle got 404 votes to Masterson's 268.

George Hinkle took office on January 12, 1880, and served two terms from 1880-84. The job of sheriff did not pay much and in August of 1881 he got a ninety-day leave of absence to go to Texas and get a contract to build cross-fence for the XIT Ranch. George Hinkle moved some jobless railroad workers to Texas to work on the 200 miles of cross-



Hinkle is shown here in a photo taken in August, 1964, while he was appearing with the Holmes Rodeo at the Ohio State Fair. Pfening Photo.

fence dividing the ranch into pastures. He made more on the fence job in ninety days than he would have got in two years as sheriff.

That is the reason Milt was born in Texas in a sod house on the XIT Ranch rather than in Kansas. The name and brand of the ranch where he was born (X.I.T.) means "Ten Counties in Texas." The land comprising the ranch was deeded to "Cattle Barons" by the name of Sneed and Barson by the Republic of Texas in return for funds with which to build the Capital Building at Austin.

Milt is a mixture of German, Irish, French and Cherokee Indian. He won his first bronc riding contest in 1896 at the age of 15 years at Silver City, New Mexico. In 1897 he assisted in driving one of the last herds to go over the old Chisholm Trail from Texas to Montana.

Since then he has probably ridden more bucking bronchos than any other man living. He broke horses for the United States Government during the Spanish-American War and again during the first World War. Altogether he has probably ridden more than 20,000

In 1927 Hinkle managed the wild west after show on the Sells-Floto Circus. He can be identified as the man in the center of the second row with the very large western hat. Pfening Collection.





horses. During that time he traveled with most of the Wild West Shows, both large and small.

He toured the United States, Europe and South America with the 101 Ranch Show, toured the United States and Europe with Buffalo Bill and his show. He was with Kit Carson Buffalo Ranch Wild West and Pawnee Bills Wild West Show. He was with Tompkin's Wild West and was stranded in Australia with Fred Atkins Wild West Show and he and Buffalo Vernon had to work their way back to America as firemen on a boat during the thirty-three day voyage back to San Francisco.

Milt Hinkle has twice been champion bulldogger or steer wrestler and was the first white cowboy to perform that feat. That was in 1899. The first cowboy to do it was a negro, Bill Pickett, "The Dusty Demon." Milt explains that originally "Bulldogging" was done by the man holding the steer down with his teeth holding the bull's nose, like a bulldog.

Milt has not only bulldogged steers from horses but from automobiles, motorcycles and an airplane. He bulldogged from an auto in 1908 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and from a motorcycle at Amerillo, Texas, in 1911. He bulldogged a steer from a low flying airplane at Neuno Lardo, Mexico, February 22, 1931. He jumped from the plane when it was about 14 feet above the ground. The steer was killed and Milt was crippled for life. As the plane was going about 60 miles per hour and the steer was doing about 35, that meant that he had to jump from the plane when it was about 10 feet ahead of the steer. Milt said the reason he has been the only one to do this is "because no one else is that dumb."

Milt jokingly said he has one scar and that covers his entire body. But he hasn't had as many injuries as would be expected of a man who has taken so many chances. He has had a broken hip, two broken ribs, a broken leg, a fractured collar bone and bruises too numerous to mention.

He can call among his friends movie stars, Indian chiefs, Indian scouts, presidents and circus owners among many more. Some of these were Buffalo Bill, Pawnee Bill, Sitting Bull, Geronimo and Cochise. He was body guard to Theodore Roosevelt when he was on his trip of adventure and exploration along the Amazon River (River of Doubt).

During this time he found time to travel with different circuses including the two southern wagon shows, M. L. Clark and Mighty Haag. He was with the Clark Show off and on for about three years. While there he was lot superintendent and he worked the two famous bulls of that show, "Old Ned" that later became "Tusko" and "Mena."

He said he could take Ned and Mena, put Mena pushing and Ned pulling (because of his tusks). He said he would stay with Ned in front, putting Mena back first and placing her head where he wanted it on the wagon and say "Hold it gal," then he would take a hook, put it under Ned's chin and holler "Come Mena" and something had to move and it did. No wagons ever stayed on the lot. He said he and Lee Clark (son of M. L. (Mack Loren) Clark) were great pals.

The elephant Mena was advertised for sale by the Al G Kelly-Miller Bros. Circus in 1943 and Milt was trying to buy her. He wanted to place her in the zoo at Alexandria, Louisiana. She had spent many a winter at the Clark quarters in Alexandria but she died with the Kelly-Miller Show at Waurika, Oklahoma, on November 6, 1954, before she could get back to her old home town.

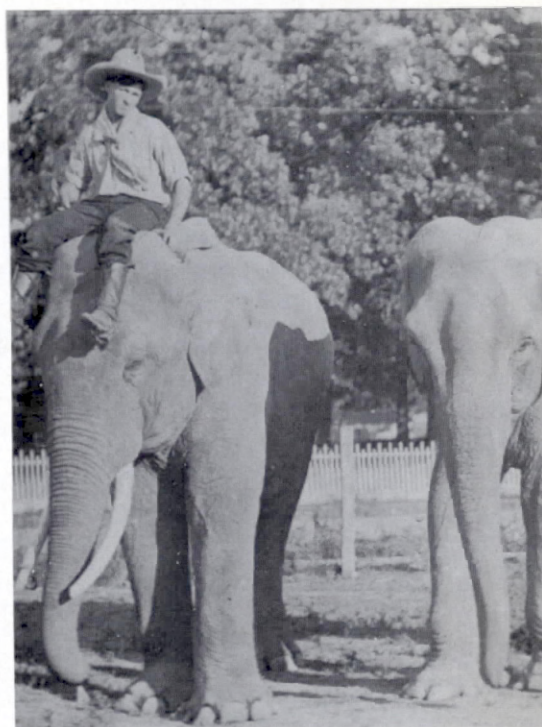
About the deepest Milt ever got into circus business was in the spring of 1945 when he, Harry Hammil and Ben Davenport got together to build the Austin Bros. Circus. Old wagons and railroad cars were purchased from Frank West, who had them on his carnival. They were in such bad shape that some of the wagons did not look like they would run another mile without falling apart. Workmen were put to work under the supervision of Milt Hinkle and were soon rebuilt into first class rolling stock. The wagons were freshly painted red with blue borders and the Austin Bros. in yellow and circus in silver.

The equipment came from many different sources. Aside from the wagons and train the side show came from Max Goodman's Show. Retouched banners from Christy Bros. The marquee from Gorman Bros., menagerie top from Russell Bros., big top and lumber from Dailey Bros.

The show opened at Austin, Texas, the quarters town, on March 30, and made a fine flash on the lot with the sparkling wagons and canvas in good shape. Milt Hinkle was manager at the start but did not stay with it long and was soon back with a wild west show, bulldogging steers.

Among Milt's many endeavors in later years is his work around rodeos where he is well-known as a promoter and he had the Wild West Show at the World's Fair in New York in 1939. For years he toured the United States and Canada in his special bus loaded with mementos of the old west he had collected during the years and giving lectures on his favorite subjects. Among his many fans are children. Milt gets along well with the "small fry." He said he loved children and children loved him.

Milt spends the winters down in Florida alone in his house trailer along a small country road. Maybe that reminds him of the loneliness of the



Milt Hinkle was the lot superintendent on the M. L. Clark wagon show in 1912. He is shown here seated on Ned's head with Mena alongside. Author's Collection.

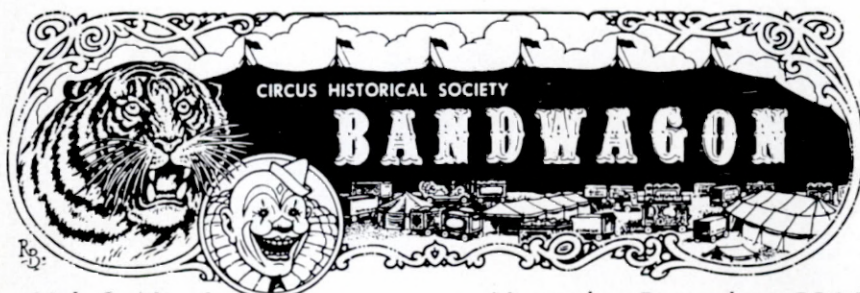
prairie. But with his well-filled scrap books and his writings for western magazines, his days are well filled until spring when he heads north with the rodeos and another season on the road.

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Tom Parkinson, Associate Editor

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#### THIS MONTH'S COVER

This lot scene of the John H. Sparks Famous Shows was taken in 1905 or 1906. Charlie Sparks is shown seated on right in the buggy that was about to lead the parade off the lot. Eight wagons are shown in the parade line up including the buggy and the bandwagon. Part of the large tunnel car is shown on the left, with another box car and two coaches on up the track. The box car has J.H.S. lettered on the end as was the custom on two and three car shows of that period that moved with passenger trains. Original print from the Pfening Collection.

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To All C.H.S. Members  
and Circus Personnel



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#### THE PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

The new membership roster should be in your hands soon. Members who have joined after it was printed will be listed in each issue of Bandwagon. By using the printed roster plus these lists in Bandwagon you will have a record of all members. Another roster will not be printed next year.

We will have easily reached our half-way goal in the membership drive by the first of the year by having added one hundred new members. Despite the unfortunate



death of several of our members, the loss of 55 dropped for non payment of dues, we still will show a modest gain in the total number for the year. I have informed the Board of Directors as required by the by-laws the names of those dropped for non payment of dues and have requested that they make every effort to contact those in their divisions in an attempt to get them reinstated. I feel that many of these who have been dropped have merely overlooked paying their dues and have no intention of permanently leaving the Society.

The first year of this administration has run rather smoothly I think. We plan to improve on a few things next year. Dues payments which have dribbled in all summer have created extra work and made it difficult to keep the membership list up to date. This was the main reason for the delay in getting out the printed roster. The tardy dues payments by many was caused partially by fact that the notices were late in reaching some members. Next year we shall send a dues notice to every member in time to reach him no later than April 15th and we shall hope that everyone will pay his dues promptly at the time they are due which is May 1. This prompt payment will eliminate a lot of problems for the secretary, treasurer and editor of Bandwagon. We are in good shape financially and there is no need to consider any raise in membership or subscription fees at this time. I do continue to stress advertising in the Bandwagon and the sale of back issues as a source of additional revenue.

Editor Pfening has given us an outstanding year of Bandwagons. He is to be congratulated on this splendid effort. Likewise our thanks go to all the members who have aided him in this work. The editor and myself believe that the present Bandwagon policy is popular and it shall be continued in 1965. No current circus reviews will be run but Associate Editor Tom Parkinson will again be called upon to prepare a general season's review so as to record for the benefit of future historians the important circus events of the season. The Bandwagon continues to be the greatest circus magazine bargain in the world and should be a major selling point in attracting new members. In the last issue (Sept-Oct) there were 54 pictorial cuts, all of historical interest coming from the great circus collections of this country. It would be impossible to obtain prints today of a great many of them as most collectors will inform you. The policy of more and better photos each issue will continue and we shall continue to try and use those shots which have not had wide circulation in the past.

I am anxiously awaiting hearing from as many who care to write their ideas and suggestions for the 1965 convention. We try and set the time and place just as soon in the year as we can so that members can make their vacation and other plans accordingly.

JOE BRADBURY,  
President

A number of magazines did come back last issue. These were mainly from changes of address. The post office will not forward third class mail, and each one coming back requires 8 cents postage due and a minimum of 8 cents to be mailed again. Please advise changes of address in advance and save us this bother and expense.



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# CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

FROM THE  
**CIRCUS WORLD MUSEUM**  
AND  
BARABOO, WISCONSIN

We thank you one and all for your  
interest and help and support in 1964.

In return we shall continue to provide  
all of you with our best possible effort  
in the presentation of animated Circus  
History.

— The STAFF

